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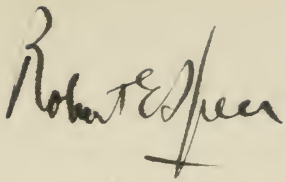

Archibald McLean.

Where the Book Speaks

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Or

Mission Studies in the Bible

By

ARCHIBALD McLEAN

President of the Foreign Christian Missionary Society

And author of "Missionary Addresses" "Hand-Book of Missions," and "A Circuit of the Globe"

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 80 Wabash Avenue
Toronto: 25 Richmond Street, W.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street

Foreword

OF making missionary books there is no end. Missionary biographies and autobiographies; missionary histories; works on the non-Christian religions, on the different fields, on missionary problems, theories and methods; reports of missionary conferences; missionary sermons and addresses, come from the press in a perpetual stream. These works are of the greatest value, and cannot be read too widely. This book is somewhat different. Its aim is to show the connection between missions and the Bible. The missionary idea runs like golden cord through all revelation. In Genesis we have the promise of a Saviour; in Revelation we have the beatific vision of a world evangelized and redeemed. The New Testament was written by missionaries who were in the thick of the fight. They had a missionary purpose in mind. They wished to enlist all mankind under the banner of Christ, and to teach the enlisted to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded. The "Studies" that constitute this volume were prepared with no thought of publication. They are published because some who heard them felt that they would help many busy people and many who do not have access to the literature of the subject. I make no claim to profundity or to originality. In writing I have had the plain people and young people in mind, and not missionary experts. I have availed myself of the results of the labours of commentators and other students in the same field, giving credit where I knew credit was due. My one aim has been to give the thought of God as it is related to missions, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but in words which the Holy Spirit teaches.

On this account I have not hesitated to repeat the same Scriptural passages over and over again. If I can lodge the truth of God in the minds and hearts of the readers, I shall be more than satisfied.

ARCHIBALD MCLEAN.

Cincinnati.

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Where the Book Speaks

I

THE NEW TESTAMENT A MISSIONARY VOLUME

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken.—Isa. 1 : 2.

THIS book that we call the New Testament is a missionary volume. It is the greatest missionary volume that has ever been written or that ever will be written. Every part of it has missionary significance. The man who would understand it must read it with this thought in mind. The Gospels furnish the missionary with his message. They state the great truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and they furnish the evidence of that proposition. By virtue of His death on the cross He became the author of eternal redemption to as many as should obey Him. By His resurrection from among the dead He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness. Paul told the Corinthians that the gospel he preached to them was this, "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." All four evangelists record these facts. They give large space to them, because these facts are fundamental in the Christian system; because without the death and burial and resurrection of Christ there could be no gospel for men to preach.

The personal ministry of Jesus was confined to Palestine. He said He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of

Israel. Nevertheless His teaching showed that the whole world and all the people that dwell therein were included in His program. His aims and purposes were not parochial or provincial or even national; they were universal. He was the original imperialist. So we hear Him say, "And other sheep have I which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." We hear Him say, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him." We hear Him say, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." Again, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Once more, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations; and then shall the end come." It was to a sinful woman of Samaria that He addressed some of the greatest words that ever fell on human ears; it was to that sinful woman that He announced that He was the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. It was while listening to a Roman centurion that He marvelled and said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." At the time of His birth wise men from the east came to Bethlehem and fell down and worshipped Him; and opening their treasures they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. Towards the end of His earthly career some Greeks went up to the feast and said to one of His disciples, "Sir, we would see Jesus." When He heard of this request He said, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." The wise men from the east and these Greeks were the first-fruits of that great multitude that John saw before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white

robes, and palms in their hands, a multitude that no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues.

Our Lord reminded His own people that there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land, but to none of them was the prophet sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian. All through His ministry He was trying to show that God was the Father of the spirits of all flesh; and that His sympathies were as wide as the race. In His parables and miracles there are clear intimations of the world-wide scope of the religion which He founded. The Roman, the Samaritan, the Canaanite, the publican and the sinful were among His beneficiaries. No soul that came to Him was sent away empty.

The name given to the twelve men that He appointed that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons, indicates that Christianity is essentially a missionary religion. These men were to carry on all that He began to do and to teach. Luke tells us that He named them apostles or missionaries. They were not theologians or ecclesiastics or prelates or philosophers, but messengers. They were to go out as witnesses. They were to declare what they had heard, what they had seen with their eyes, what they beheld, what their hands had handled, concerning the Word of life. These men incarnated the missionary passion; they were what their names signified. "And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ." The authorities complained that they had filled Jerusalem with their teaching. A little later it was said of them that they had turned the world upside down. Before they went to their reward they testified that the

gospel had been preached and was bearing fruit in all creation under heaven.

The Gospels culminate in the great commission. All that goes before leads up to this and prepares for it. All that follows in the New Testament is a result of the carrying out of the commission by the apostles and their associates. When our Lord sent these men out on their first preaching tour, He told them that they were not to go into any way of the Gentiles, nor to enter any city of the Samaritans; they were to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now their field is the world. They were to go in all directions, into "regions Cæsar never knew, where his eagles never flew," and to give the inhabitants a knowledge of salvation through Jesus the Crucified. The word of command was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." They were to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; they were to teach those who accepted their message to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded. Warneck shows that the gospel necessarily issues in a missionary commandment. "It is penetrated through and through by thoughts of universal salvation, which make it a religion for the whole world." Nothing is more deeply imbedded in Christianity than its universality. The commission is not "a counsel of perfection"; it is a positive command enforcing on the disciples what their Lord had spent His ministerial life in doing, and directing a course of action which is so essential and inseparable a part of the plan of salvation that it is impossible to neglect it without wrecking the whole scheme. The great commission contemplates the evangelization of the whole wide world. Nothing short of this answers to the sublime conceptions and aims of its Author.

The critics have had much to say about the Gospels, about their composition and authorship and date and credibility; but no one has ventured to deny their missionary significance.

No one has charged that their missionary teaching and spirit are interpolations. The apostles were incapable of interpolating the missionary teaching of the Gospels. They were Jews and had all the limitations of their race. They lacked the cosmopolitanism of Christ. "For Him there were no race prejudices, no party lines, no sectarian limits, no favoured nation. There was nothing between His love and the world. His heart beat for the world—and on Calvary broke for the world." It was only in such a heart that the missionary enterprise could be conceived.

The Gospels are missionary documents. Their name indicates their nature. They are good tidings. They are not "tidings" at all except to such as are ignorant of them. They are not "good" except to those who hear them. The messenger who loitered with the king's pardon till the prisoner was executed did not bring good tidings. The pardon was not worth the parchment upon which it was written. Tidings that are not made known possess only potential value. It is of the very essence of good tidings that they be proclaimed. The first impulse in a healthy mind on hearing a good thing is to pass it on. Philip and Andrew heard of Jesus, and their first concern was to bring their own brothers to Him. When the apostles were strictly charged not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, they said, "We cannot but speak the things we saw and heard." They could not keep the good news to themselves; they could die more easily. It is evident that missions are a vital function in the Christian system. They are included in its very essence. They are of its warp and woof; they are not a fringe or tassel on the garment. The apostles understood this. As soon as they received the gift of the Holy Spirit they went out and preached everywhere; the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word with the signs that followed. These signs demonstrated the fact that they had correctly interpreted the meaning of His parting charge.

The booked called "The Acts," what is it? It is sometimes spoken of as the book of conversions. And it is that, in part. Quite a number of conversions are recorded on its pages. The apostles spoke as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. Many of those who heard were convicted of sin and asked with much concern what they should do. They were told what to do by men who were not giving their own thoughts, but the thoughts of God. This book is sometimes called the gospel of the Holy Spirit. And it is that, in part. The Holy Spirit descended upon that little company assembled in the upper room in Jerusalem, and the early church was guided in its thought and speech and conduct and in all its ministries by the Holy Spirit. But The Acts is first of all and last of all and most of all an inspired record of the missionary activity of the church in the first decades of its existence. Here is the core of the book, "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." That is its main thesis, and all the rest is commentary and illustration. I have sometimes thought that a stranger coming into one of our assemblies might conclude that we regarded the thirty-eighth verse of the second chapter as the heart of the book. But to do that would be to miss its meaning, great and important as that verse is, and rightly as we have emphasized it.

For the first few years Peter was the leader; because to him the keys of the kingdom were given. While Peter was the leader the gospel was preached throughout Judea and Samaria and Galilee and at some few points beyond the limits of Palestine. In course of time Paul appears on the scene. He was peculiarly qualified by natural gifts and by training for leadership. After some years Peter and Paul divided the field between them. Peter went to the Jews; Paul went to the outside nations. We know what followed. At once Peter retired into the background. Paul came to the front and

filled the whole stage, and almost two-thirds of The Acts are occupied with the records of Paul's missionary travels and sermons and trials and experiences while serving Christ as a foreign missionary. The last glimpse we have of him he is in the capital of the empire preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him. There the curtain falls, and we see him no more.

The Epistles, what are they? For the most part they are letters written by missionaries to mission churches which they had founded. The field was large. The apostles were few in number. Facilities for getting about were not as complete then as they are now. Many problems were pressing for solution in these churches gathered out of Judaism and out of Paganism. The same questions that confront missionaries to-day, questions relating to idolatry, polygamy, caste, slavery, drunkenness, extortion, reviling, the right relation between the sexes, the nurture of children, and kindred questions, confronted the church in the first century. Sometimes the apostles could go in person and settle these questions. Sometimes they could not go; then they wrote letters and discussed them. In the providence of God these letters have come down to us, and they constitute the Epistles of the New Testament. It must be remembered that the Epistles are missionary documents; they must be read as such by those who wish to have a clew to their meaning. The Christian communities addressed were all far from Jerusalem, the birthplace of the church. These communities were located in Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossæ, Thessalonica, Pontus, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. These peoples had been won to Christ by missionary endeavour.

In these Epistles we read, "Is God *the God* of the Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also: if so be that God is one, and He shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith."

God is represented as saying, "I will call that My people which was not My people; and her beloved, that was not beloved." "For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon Him; for, Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." "The Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." John speaks of those who went forth for the sake of the Name, taking nothing of the Gentiles, and adds, "We ought therefore to welcome such, that we may be fellow-workers for the truth."

The Pastoral Epistles are full of missionary significance. Timothy was exhorted to tarry in Ephesus, that he might charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God, which is of faith. Titus was left at Crete, that he might set in order the things that are wanting, and appoint elders in every city. These men were missionary agents. They were Paul's most trusted lieutenants. In these Epistles we read, "There is one God, one Mediator also between God and man, Himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, the testimony to be borne in its own times." We read also that "the grace of God hath appeared bringing salvation to all men."

The book of Revelation, what is it? There are some things in this book that I do not understand. I do not think that any one understands them. I never met but two men who claimed to understand all about this book, and I think they understood less about it than any other two intelligent men with whom I have ever talked on the subject. We read of a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon was at her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. I do not know what that woman represented. The Christian Scientists hold that this woman represented Mrs. Eddy. So in the mother church in Boston there is a stained glass window showing the woman of the

Apocalypse clothed with the sun and crowned with twelve stars. Above it is a representation of the book, "Science and Health." Columbus thought he was the angel flying in mid-heaven having the eternal gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth. I think Mrs. Eddy's admirers and Columbus were mistaken. We are told of a beast that came up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his head names of blasphemy. This beast was like a leopard and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. Another beast came up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon, and his number is six hundred and sixty and six. I do not know what these beasts represented. I do not know what much of the imagery and many of the symbols of that book mean. But I know what the book means, and that is the main thing. If it had been important that we should understand all the imagery and all the symbols of this strange book I feel sure that the Holy Spirit would have given us some key to their understanding. He has not given us any such key; therefore I conclude that it is not very important whether we understand them or not. The book of Revelation is a forecast of the final victory, when all rule, and all authority, and all power opposed to Christ shall be abolished, and when He shall reign from pole to pole with undivided and undisputed sway. Here is the heart of the book, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." John saw the nations of the saved walking in the light of the holy city. He saw the kings of the earth bringing their honour and their glory into it. He heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, "Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth." Every idol has been abolished. Every false faith has perished. The earth is full of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. The eternal purpose

of God has been consummated. The promise made in Genesis has been fulfilled.

The New Testament, I repeat, is a missionary volume throughout. The gospels were written by missionaries. Mark and Luke had been associates of Paul. These men wrote that those who had been won and those who might be won to the faith might have a permanent and reliable record of the great facts upon which their faith was founded. The Epistles were written that the believers might have a body of teaching to guide them in all that relates to life and godliness. Guided by the Holy Spirit the apostles wrote these documents for the church of that age and of all ages. What the vertebral column is to the human body that the missionary idea is to the New Testament. One might as well think that he could cut the vertebral column out of the body without destroying the body as to cut all that has missionary significance out of this Book without destroying the Book. One of our most gifted men has said that if you were to cut missions out of the New Testament it would bleed to death. What would be left? The covers and the margins and perhaps the very short Epistles of Philemon, Second John and Jude. The Book as a book would be no more. If there were time to discuss the Old Testament it would appear that that is a missionary volume also. The finest things in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms relate to the coming of Christ and to the redemption of the world through Christ. "In Him shall all the families of the earth be blessed." "Unto Him shall the obedience of the peoples be." "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end."

The missionary enterprise is no novelty. It is not an invention of William Carey or Samuel J. Mills or Count Zinzindorf; it is as old as Christianity. The missionary idea is coeval with the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The missionary cause did not originate in any human heart or brain; it originated in the love of the eternal God, and Jesus

Christ the first missionary was the greatest expression of that love. The missionary enterprise is of God, and He is back of it giving it momentum and direction and efficiency. He goes before to open doors; He goes with His servants to protect and prosper them and to bless them with His wondrous grace. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He shall have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His law. His word shall not return unto Him void; it shall accomplish that which He pleases, and prosper in the thing whereunto He has sent it. Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

Nor is this a work of small consequence. As a matter of fact every church in the world to-day is the fruit of missions. The church would never have gained a foot-hold in the world if it had not been for missions. Not only so, but the church would cease to exist in a generation if it were not for missions. Every Christian nation on the globe is the fruit of missions. Every Christian home, every hospital, every asylum, every hall of legislation, every court of justice, every institution and every movement that has the welfare of humanity as its object is the fruit of this divine enterprise. We ourselves, whether we admit it and thank God for it or deny it, are the fruit of missions. We have only to look into the mirror to see one of the greatest miracles of missions. Our forefathers were naked savages; the gospel has made us what we are, and the gospel was brought to our forefathers by missionaries. The book that underlies all our missionary operations as a root underlies a plant, is itself a product of missions. This book that has more regenerating and refining power than all the other books in the world combined could not have come into existence without the missionary propaganda. What do we owe to missions? What do we not owe to missions?

One of the maxims most surely believed among us is this, "Where the Scriptures speak we speak; where the Scriptures are silent we are silent." We say that we accept the New

Testament as our alone-sufficient and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, and reject every confession and dogma that claims authority over the conscience. If we live up to that high claim we will be unalterably and everlastingly and enthusiastically committed to the cause of world-wide evangelization. To be consistent and to be loyal to the Captain of our salvation we must give this work the same place in our lives, and in our worship, and in our expenditures, that it has in the Book.

While this should be our attitude it is a well-known fact that many in our fellowship are opposed to missions. There are others who say this cause makes no appeal to them. They make it a point to be absent when its claims are presented. They contribute nothing to its support. These men are members of the churches and some of them fill offices in the churches. They are interested in the local work, but in nothing else. These may be men of good report in their own communities; they may be upright and honourable in all their dealings; their word may be as good as a bond; but they are surely lacking in one particular at least. They need to mix some intelligence with their honesty and veracity. They need to read the New Testament with open eyes and with honest hearts. If they do they will see the missionary enterprise in its true proportions and its true perspective. They will see it as Christ sees it. They will see, as has been said, that missions inhere in Christianity, are of its very genius and substance, are implied in its doctrine, and that if every Christian should perish, the missionary enterprise would be reborn in the first regenerated soul. They will see that missions and Christianity, like liberty and union, are one and inseparable. Then they will say as Paul did, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints was this grace given, that I should preach among the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Every redeemed soul should know that in opposing missions he is opposing Christ and hindering the accomplishment of the work for which He died on the cross. To be indifferent to

missions is to be indifferent to the cause that lies closest to the heart of Him whom we profess to serve. To have no share in the greatest work ever given the children of men to do is to invite self-impoverishment and to miss the greatest blessing that God is waiting to give to those who obey Him. The prudent and profitable thing to do is to enlist under the banner of Christ and to do all in our power to help Him redeem the world. He is Lord of all. On His head are many diadems. In His hand is the sceptre of universal empire. On His vesture and on His thigh is the inscription, "King of kings and Lord of lords." He must reign until every enemy is put under His feet. It is for every believer to put himself in line with Christ's gracious purpose and assist Him to the fullest in giving the gospel of salvation to all creation under heaven.

II

THE MISSIONARY IDEA IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed.—GAL. 3 : 8.

THE evangelization of the world was in the purpose of God from the beginning; it was not an afterthought. He made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth. He dealt bountifully with all that they might feel after Him and find Him. The gospel was intended for and adapted to every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. The accomplishment of this gracious intention is the one far-off, divine event to which the whole creation moves. It is the consummation and crown of all God's dealings with the race. When the foundations of the earth were laid, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. When the work of redemption shall be finished, all created intelligences shall ascribe blessing and honour and glory and dominion forever and ever to Him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb. God's thought respecting the evangelization of the world has a very large and prominent place in the Scriptures. It is the spinal column, so to speak, and every other part of the entire system of revelation is connected with, and depends upon, it. Let us trace this thought in the Old Testament.

Abram was called to leave his country and kindred and home. He had the promise that he should be the father of a great nation; his name should be great; he should be blessed and be a blessing; and in him all the families of the earth should be

blessed (Gen. 12: 1–3). That promise marked an epoch in human history, as the signing of the Great Charter at Runnymede marked an epoch in English history, as the signing of the Declaration of Independence marked an epoch in American history. After the trial of his faith the promise was repeated. God said, "By Myself have I sworn, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22: 17–18). The same promise was made to Isaac. The Lord said to him, "Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land I shall tell thee of; sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and bless thee, and unto thy seed I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I sware unto Abrabam thy father; and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven; and I will give unto thy seed all these lands; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 26: 2–4). On the way to Haran Jacob lay down to sleep, and saw a ladder whose top reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascended and descended upon it. Above it the Lord stood and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread forth to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 28: 12–14). The blessing promised to Abraham, the friend of God, descended through Isaac and not through Ishmael who was a wild-ass among men; and through Jacob, and not through Esau, who was a profane man and who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. To each of these patriarchs it is said, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Each of the three was a channel through which divinest blessings flowed to the

whole creation. In blessing his sons Jacob said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the obedience of the peoples be" (Gen. 49: 10). To Moses God said, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14: 21). The promise is confirmed with an oath, that we might have assurance made doubly sure. Because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself. The Most High entered into covenant relations with Abraham and his seed. He constituted them the depositaries of His revealed will; He selected them as His agents to communicate the blessings of redemption to the whole world. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined."

We find this thought in the Psalms. Thus we read, "Ask of Me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. 2: 8). Kings and rulers may oppose; their opposition shall not prevail. Again, "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the kindred of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's and He is the ruler among the nations" (Ps. 22: 27, 28). Again, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations" (Ps. 67: 1–2). The covenant people shall be blessed and through them all the end of the earth shall be led to fear Him. Again, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him, and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him" (Ps. 72: 8-11). His reign shall be world-wide, and it shall endure forever and forevermore. All nations shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him happy. Once more, "All nations whom Thou

hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord, and they shall glorify Thy name. For Thou art great, and doest wondrous things; Thou art God alone" (Ps. 86: 9, 10). Among the gods of the nations there was none like to Jehovah, neither were there any works like unto His works. Blessed be His glorious name forever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. In his dedicatory prayer Solomon used similar language. "Moreover concerning the stranger, that is not of Thy people Israel, when he shall come from Thy far country for Thy great name's sake, and Thy mighty hand, and Thy stretched out arm; when they shall come and pray towards this house; then hear Thou from heaven, even from Thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee for; that all the peoples of the earth may know Thy name, and fear Thee, as doth Thy people Israel" (2 Chron. 6: 32, 33).

The prophets spoke of God's world-wide purpose. Thus Isaiah said: "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Is. 2: 2, 3). The way of a man is not in himself; it is not in a man that walks to direct his steps. Realizing this, all nations shall seek divine guidance. God shall teach them of His ways, and they shall walk in His paths. This same prophet said, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, which standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto Him shall the nations seek, and His resting place shall be glorious" (Is. 11: 10). Christ was to be as a banner under which the nations should rally. The spirit of the Lord should be upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit

of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. Again, "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that the Lord of hosts has blessed them saying, 'Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance'" (Is. 19 : 25). The blessing of Abraham was not to be confined to one people. For good reasons, Israel dwelt alone for a time, but no Chinese wall shut that nation from all other nations. God is the Father of all, and He desires the salvation of all. He says, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. By Myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Is. 45 : 22, 23). There were gods many and lords many. There were gods of wood and stone and silver. But Jehovah said to the makers and to the worshippers, "I am a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me." Again, "It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth" (Is. 49 : 6). That was to be the work of His chosen people. Their first concern was to give the light to them that sit in darkness and to guide their feet into the way of peace. When they sinned themselves, they were carried away into captivity; but God did not forget them. For their sakes He made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; He caused all the earth to see His salvation of them. Because of His discipline and deliverance, kings shall see and arise; princes and they shall worship. We read again, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory

shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Is. 60 : 1–3). The nations should gather about that people whom the Lord had blessed as doves fly to their windows. The whole earth should be enlightened with the glory of the Lord. Again, "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations" (Is. 61 : 11). Contemporaneous systems were tribal and local. They had no thought of being anything else. But from the first and all along the idea that the gospel is for all nations is made prominent. As the spirit of God moved the prophet he said, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth. And the nations shall see Thy righteousness, and all kings Thy glory" (Is. 62 : 1, 2). It was God's purpose to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see His glory.

Another prophet said, "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered into it, to the name of the Lord" (Jer. 3 : 17). When Israel's backslidings should be healed, God would be merciful to His people and prosper them. Then other nations would come to share in their prosperity and joy. "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, unto Me shalt thou return; and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of My sight, then shalt thou not be removed; and thou shalt swear, As the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him shall they glory" (Jer. 4 : 1, 2). Everywhere the thought that Israel is to impart blessings to the nations is emphasized. O Lord, my strength, and my stronghold, and my refuge in the day of affliction, unto Thee shall the nations come from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Our fathers have inherited naught but

lies, even vanity and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make unto himself gods, which yet are no gods? Therefore, behold, I will cause thee to know, this once will I cause thee to know Mine hand and My might; and they shall know that My name is Jehovah (Jer. 16 : 19–21). By their sins they cut off blessings from the nations; by their fidelity and nobleness they caused good to come to the ends of the earth. Daniel tells us that the King of Babylon saw a great image. Part of it was of gold, part of silver, part of brass, part of iron, and part of clay. He saw a stone cut out without hands, and it smote the image and ground it to powder, and the stone became a great mountain, and it filled the whole earth. The King of Babylon was the head of gold. Other kings that should come after him were represented by the inferior ingredients. In the days of these kings the God of heaven would set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever (Dan. 2 : 31–35, 44). Micah, speaking of the glorious work of Christ, said, "And He shall stand, and shall feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide; for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth" (Mic. 5 : 4). Speaking through another prophet, the Spirit said, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2 : 14). Through another prophet still it is said, "For thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations; and the desirable things of all nations shall come" (Hag. 2 : 6, 7). Another said, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be My people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts

hath sent Me unto thee" (Zech. 2 : 10, 11). "It shall yet come to pass that there shall come peoples, and the inhabitants of many cities; and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go speedily to intreat the favour of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also, yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favour of the Lord.' Thus saith the Lord of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8 : 20–23). Israel was blessed. This was evident to all. Because of the loving favour of God peoples from the ends of the earth came seeking to participate in His blessings. The prophet says again, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King cometh unto thee; He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off; and He shall speak peace unto the nations; and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9 : 9, 10). Through Malachi God said, "For from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same My name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered unto My name, and a pure offering; for My name is great among the Gentiles" (Mal. 1 : 11). From the call of Abram to the close of the Old Testament canon the catholicity of the divine aim is apparent. God insists upon it, that it is His purpose to bless all the nations. He called Israel to the highest of all services, and not to selfishly enjoy the blessings bestowed. His chosen people were to be a light to the heathen world by bringing to all peoples the knowledge of His revealed will. This idea did not take possession of the Jewish mind in the Exile. The universality of the perfected Kingdom of God was

not borrowed from the world-empire of Assyria. This idea was rooted in the thought of the people from the days of Abraham; it was implanted by the Divine hand, and was not a product of the captivity.

The evangelization of the world is set forth with much greater fullness and clearness in the New Testament than in the Old. Paul teaches that it was not revealed in other generations as it has since been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit. Abraham and Moses and David and Isaiah and Daniel and Micah and Malachi knew much of Christ and of the fullness of blessing in Christ for all the families of the earth, but they did not know the full extent of God's grace to all mankind, and did not know that the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was to be wholly broken down and all inequality removed. What they saw dimly we see clearly because of the fuller revelation in Christ. While this is true, it is also true that the universality of salvation is presented in the Law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms. This is a fundamental idea in the Divine plan of human redemption, and was foreshadowed from the very beginning. What was written aforetime was written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope.

III

THE CHURCH A MISSIONARY INSTITUTION

Acts 1 : 1–9

IN the third verse of this chapter we are told that our Lord showed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing to the apostles by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God. I think it a significant fact that, of all the things He said to them in that supremely important period, only one has been recorded. And what is yet more significant is that that one thing has been recorded by all four evangelists. Every student of the New Testament knows how few things all four do record. We do not have a fourfold record of the birth of Christ, or of His baptism, or of His temptation, or of the transfiguration, or of His ascension to glory. We do not have a fourfold record of a single one of our Lord's discourses or parables or prayers. All give us an account of His agony in the garden, of His trial and condemnation, of His burial, and His resurrection from among the dead. And all four give us the great commission in some form.

As given by Matthew the commission reads, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." As given by Mark the commission runs, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that

disbelieveth shall be condemned." As given by Luke the commission reads, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." As given by John it runs thus, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." And when He had said this He breathed on them and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit; whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Here is the fourfold record of our Lord's last charge to His disciples.

What is doubly significant is that we have a fifth record of the commission. The apostles went to the Lord with a political question. They said, "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." And when He had said these things, as they were looking, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. The last words these men heard from the lips of their Divine Lord were these, "The uttermost parts of the earth." His desire was that they might know and remember that the last man alive on the planet is included in His purpose of grace and of glory.

Several years after His ascension our Lord appeared to Saul of Tarsus and commissioned him to bear His name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. Saul was told to go into Damascus, that he might be taught all things which were appointed for him to do. Ananias was sent to him that he might receive his sight, and be baptized, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. But no one was sent to him in Damascus or elsewhere with a copy of the great commission. Neither did he go up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before him.

He was an apostle, not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father. Paul told Agrippa that Christ told him that He appeared to him, to appoint him a minister and a witness both of the things in which he had seen Him, and of the things in which He would appear to him. The Lord said to him that He would send him to the people of Israel and the Gentiles, to open their eyes, that they might turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Him. Paul said that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared in Damascus first, and Jerusalem, and through all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. He testified both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come, "How that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles." Though given independently Paul's commission was substantially the same as that given to the eleven in Galilee and on Olivet. The fact that the glorified Redeemer felt it expedient to appear in person to this man and to give him his commission from His own lips is most significant.

These six records of the great commission are not an accident. We cannot think of such a thing as an accident in connection with the Holy Spirit. What He does is done with fullest knowledge and for a great and worthy purpose. The repetition is for the sake of clearness and emphasis. Our Lord wanted the church in every age, and in every land to understand what a large place the missionary enterprise had in His thought and in His life.

Every church in existence is organized under the great commission as its charter. It goes with the saying that an institution must comply with the conditions of its charter or forfeit its right to exist. The one work of the church as set forth in

its charter is that of evangelizing the world. It is while the church is engaged in this work that she has a right to claim the glorious promise of the continual presence of her Founder. Alexander Campbell had something like this in mind when he said, "The church of right is, and ought to be, a great missionary society. Her field is the whole earth, from sea to sea, and from the Euphrates to the last domicile of man. A Christian community without missions and missionaries would be a solecism in creation, and a gross deviation from the order, the economy, and the government of the universe." It is through the church that the manifold wisdom of God is to be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. This is according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The church is to continue steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. She is to provide for the instruction and edification of the entire membership. The church is to work out her own salvation with fear and trembling. But that is not the mission of the church. The church is to do what her Lord did while He was here; she is to seek and to save the lost. She is to go after those who have gone astray and lead them back to the Bishop and Shepherd of their souls. The church is set for a light to the nations, and for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth. That is her mission, and her ordinances and ministries are to serve as auxiliaries to this chief end. The church is to pray, "God be merciful unto us and bless us"; but the reason assigned for this prayer is "that God's way may be known on earth, His saving health among all peoples." The church is a conduit to bear the blessings of redemption to the whole wide world. So the Scriptures say, "God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." The church is a life-saving institution. The business of a life-saving station is to save those who have been wrecked and those who are in peril at sea. If the men employed to save life should spend

all their time and energy and resources in caring for their own health and comfort and in keeping the buildings and apparatus in perfect repair, the aim of the government would be defeated; the institution would be worthless and worse than worthless. And if a church should lose sight of her real mission and concentrate everything upon herself, she would cease to be of any value; she would become like salt that has lost its saving qualities, and is neither good for the ground nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out.

An army exists for one and only for one purpose, that is, to fight. This is the sole object of its existence. An army has its drill ground, its target practice, its dress parade, its barracks, its colours. But an army does not exist for the drill ground or the target practice or the dress parade or the barracks. An army exists to fight when the nation wants fighting done. If when ordered to take the field and fight an army should say that it preferred the barracks and the target practice and the evolutions of the drill ground and that it proposed to remain where it was, it would be of no advantage to the nation; it would be a national incumbrance. Ten years ago I was in Japan. Wherever I went I found men drilling. Japan was then at peace with all the world. I asked what this drilling meant. I was told this by the Japanese, "Some of these days we will have to fight Russia." Forty years ago Japan saw Russia creeping stealthily down from the north; Japan divined Russia's purpose, and Japan knew that Russia's triumph meant her destruction as a nation. So Japan began to prepare for the struggle that she foresaw was inevitable. For all these years she was quietly building up an army and navy. When the hour for fighting came every Japanese soldier and sailor was ready to do his part. We know the result. The report of the victories won at Port Arthur and at Mukden made the whole world ring from side to side. The Japanese sailors swept the Russian fleet from the sea.

In like manner the church of Christ exists for one purpose

and for one only. What is true of the church as a whole is true of each local church. This church, for example, has a beautiful auditorium, comfortable pews, a pulpit, and a regular minister. Here is the baptistery; here is the Lord's table. What has this plant been created for? What is it maintained for year after year? What is the purpose of this institution? Does all this exist simply and solely for the entertainment and edification of the membership of this congregation and such friends as may care to come here from time to time? God forbid that any member of this church should get any such notion into his head or heart. This church exists as part of Christ's army of conquest. This church exists to help Christ accomplish His purpose concerning our race. This is a militant body, and not a peace congress. It must be that if it answers to the thought of Christ as set forth by the sacred writers. Every convert who unites with this church for worship and work should understand that he is joining a missionary society. He is a soldier under the banner of Christ; he is one of those that Christ is using to subdue all things to Himself.

If this church should lose sight of its true mission, it would cease to be a church of Christ. It would degenerate into a club of some sort. This club might be made up of intelligent and respectable people; they might be well-dressed and good-looking and perfumed people; they might have a superb building, and their building might be perfect in all its appointments; they might have a very cultured and eloquent man on their rostrum; their music might be the finest in the world; but that would not be a church in any true and full and divine sense of the word. It may carve "Church of Christ" on its corner-stone and over its entrance, but losing sight of its one proper mission, and ceasing to enjoy the presence of its Lord, it is not a church, and has no right to call itself by that holy name. It is a human and not a divine institution.

One of the most effective ministers of our time says, "The

foremost issue of the church is the Christianization of the world. The church is a missionary society. Missions are not merely a department of church activity; they are the whole thing. It is an awful collapse when the church of Christ becomes nothing but an annex to a political party, or the tail end of some reform movement, or an information bureau for industrial unrest. The mission of the church is to make Christ known. In the face of all this to make the missionary campaign a side issue, to apologize for it, to neglect it, in short to do anything but make it my mission is for me to show that as a minister I have missed my calling." The pulpit throughout the entire land should ring with the commands and promises of the Lord relating to this cause. Every sermon should be in accord with the great commission. Every believer should be continually reminded of his obligations to this divine enterprise.

When the elders and deacons and the minister meet they should give this cause the same prominence that it has in the Scriptures. They should not feel that they have done their duty when they look after the building, and see that the janitor does his duty, and that the choir does its part to the satisfaction of all concerned, and that the current expenses are promptly and fully met. These men who are the overseers of the flock should pray and plan for the larger work with which the local work is vitally connected, and from which it derives all its significance. They should see that the congregation is in line with every good work. Occasionally they will call the roll of the church to see if there are not in their midst some young people of unusual promise who should be trained for the service. If there are they will go to them and tell them what they think they ought to do. They will urge them to enter college to prepare for the service. If these young people need financial assistance, the overseers will see that it is provided. When they are ready to go out the church will support them as loyally as it supports the minister at home. Every church

should be looking for such young people and should be training them for largest usefulness in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. When the Sunday-school superintendent and the teachers meet they will put the main emphasis on this work. They will not be satisfied with planning for entertainments and assigning the several parts. That is small business when the world is perishing for knowledge, and when Christ is calling for reapers for His harvest. In every department of the church's life and work the cause of the world's evangelization will have its rightful place.

We are taught to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. We do that, and rightly so. No church would tolerate any man in the pulpit whose preaching and teaching were not in harmony with the word of God, and whose life was not above reproach. No church would tolerate any perversion of the ordinances. The time will come when no church will tolerate a minister or a leadership that ignores the missionary days and fails to take the missionary offerings. For the latter is taught as clearly and as fully as the former, and a great deal more so. For every passage that can be advanced relating to baptism ten can be cited that relate to missions. For every reference to the Lord's Supper that can be quoted, fifty can be quoted relating to the evangelization of the world. If the teaching of the Scriptures that relate to missions had been emphasized as some other matters have been emphasized, it could not be said that not more than one-third of the churches and not more than one-fourth of the members give anything at all for this work. Every church and every member of every church would be enrolled as a contributor, and the contributions would be according to the ability that God has given. It is gratifying to know that a better day is coming. The time is not far distant when churches will recognize the ownership and Lordship of Christ as they do not now, and will do immeasurably more than they have ever dreamed of doing for the furtherance and universal triumph of the glorious

gospel of the blessed God. The time is coming when rich churches will understand that if they restrict their sympathies and interests to themselves they will become poor and blind and naked and in need of all things; and poor churches will realize that they will become poorer in all the highest things if they refuse to have fellowship with Christ in His efforts to redeem the world. The time is coming when Christian people will know that that is the road that leads to spiritual atrophy and ends in the valley of dry bones.

Not long ago it was my privilege to visit a church that has a great history. That church gives five thousand dollars a year for missions. It supports six missionaries and thirty helpers, and gives to erect buildings and for other purposes. That church believes that Christ meant what He said when He commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation, and makes it its chief business to obey that command. Missions are not considered an outside cause; they have the first place in the thoughts and plans and expenditures of the membership. That church wishes to be and to be known as a missionary church. The building is convenient and commodious, but strikingly plain. No money has been wasted in adornment. The building is not a Greek temple, or a magnificent cathedral; it is a workshop. It is a place where the Lord's business is transacted. There is no pipe organ. The carpet is inexpensive. Opera chairs serve as seats. There are several churches in town more impressive from an architectural point of view; there are several that cost two or three times as much: but this one gives more for the extension of the gospel than all the others combined. This church is known and honoured in all parts of the world.

Other churches take the opposite course. They set their hearts on having the finest building in the place. Their ambition is to outclass all their neighbours. When the building is dedicated there is a heavy debt upon it. The debt is a millstone around the neck of the church; it is a lion in its path.

Until the debt is paid little or nothing can be given for missions. Members urge the shameful excuse that they must be just before they can be generous; as if the cause of Christ had not the earliest and strongest claim upon them; as if that divine claim should not be met before a sacrifice was made to the pride and vanity of the membership. As soon as the debt is paid a pipe organ must be provided. Until that is paid for, the missionary cause must be content with a pittance or with nothing. As soon as the organ is clear of debt, the building must be frescoed again, and new and costly carpets must be laid. Then music of a more elaborate character must be secured; expensive singers must be engaged. The church proceeds on the assumption that the local work is the supreme thing and must be attended to first, and that the evangelization of the world is a matter of small consequence, and one that can wait for convenient seasons.

Which course is most pleasing to Christ? Which honours Him most? Which accords best with the teaching of the New Testament? To ask these questions is to answer them. A church needs and should have a suitable building for its worship and work. But while half the race is without the gospel, it would seem that simplicity should be the order of the day, that more money may be available for the support of the missionary enterprise. Surely if a church spends thirty thousand for a building for itself, and gives twenty-five dollars or less for missions, and pays twenty-five hundred dollars for an organ and gives five dollars or less for missions, it has not adopted the course that is most pleasing to the Lord. Nor is this course one that secures the respect of men of the world. When they see the church trying by means of music and eloquence and artistic and æsthetic accessories to attract and hold the fashionable and the wealthy, they despise it in their hearts. Let the church stand for the simplicity of Christ; let it exert itself to the limit of sacrifice to give the gospel to the unevangelized portions of the earth; and these men will honour it and contrib-

ute generously and joyously to its support. The history of the church Dr. Gordon ministered to in Boston, and the one Dr. Bradt ministered to in Wichita, and the history of the church in Angola demonstrate this. When the church most honours Christ, she will compel the respect of the world, and she will do most to build herself up on her most holy faith.

The church exists to assist Christ in accomplishing His gracious purpose. In order to that it is not necessary to have the finest building in the city; it is not necessary to have a grand organ. It is far more profitable to support a missionary or two. That will do more to attract the public and to build up the church in membership and in holiness and in influence than anything that can be done to minister to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. In many churches the emphasis is put in the wrong place. That which should be first of all and greatest of all, is last of all and least of all. For this very cause many churches are weak and sickly and some are dead. They misapprehended the purpose and plan of Christ, and because they did they missed the path that leads to abundant life.

The church is not to lavish her thought and her substance upon herself. She is not to study ornamentation and elegance and magnificence. She can well afford to leave that to the club and to the saloon. Her mission is a higher one. Her work in the world is to help save those for whom Christ died. Her business is to publish the truth far and near, so that the prophecy may be speedily and gloriously fulfilled, "They shall see to whom no tidings of Him came, and they that have not heard shall understand." By doing this the church will please and honour her Lord, and will bring down upon herself such a blessing that there will not be room to receive it.

IV

A MISSIONARY CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then said He unto His disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest.—MATT. 9: 35–38.

NO one can read the gospels attentively without being impressed by our Lord's constant activity. He made eight circuits of Galilee. He visited Samaria and Judea and Perea each more than once. We find Him as far north as the parts of Cæsarea Philippi. We find Him in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. We find Him in Galilee of the Gentiles. He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and His endeavour was to reach the entire population before His earthly career should close in death. Many followed Him from place to place and listened to Him from day to day. But in the very nature of the case most of the people could not do that. It was necessary for them to remain at home that they might attend to their business and domestic affairs. If they were reached at all, He must go to the cities and villages in which they lived and press the claims of the gospel home to their hearts and consciences.

John the Baptist stationed himself beside the Jordan or at places where there was an abundance of water for baptismal purposes. He waited for the people to go to him. When they

went, he preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. If they repented he baptized them. Our Lord's method was different. Instead of waiting for the people to go to Him, He searched them out. At one point the multitude sought after Him, and came unto Him, and would have stayed Him, that He should not go from them. But He said unto them, "I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also; for therefore was I sent." His mission was not to judge the world, but to save the world. He could not accomplish His mission if He should remain in one place and speak to only one group of people. Confucius said that if the philosopher has any great truth, he need not go abroad to proclaim it; the people will flock to him that they may hear it. That may be true in philosophy. It is not true in religion. The gospel must be carried to the people. Otherwise they will not hear it or care to inquire about it.

In his address in the home of Cornelius Peter referred to Jesus of Nazareth, and told how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and said that He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. This is an admirable summary of the history of the earthly life of our Lord. Buddha is nearly always represented as sitting in a lotus flower; he is in a state of slumber. Here and elsewhere Jesus the Christ is represented as going about from place to place. As He goes He teaches and preaches and heals. He is actively engaged in doing good.

We read in this passage in Matthew that when Jesus saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep without a shepherd. He saw the deepest need of human nature. He saw the moral misery and the spiritual destitution of the people. He was moved with compassion for the multitudes because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. They had no one to conduct them into green pastures and along the still

waters. They had no one to protect them. They were thrown down and stretched on the ground. They were exhausted and unable to proceed any further.

We are to remember that it was the people of rich and fertile Galilee, with its numerous and prosperous cities, our Lord had in mind. These were the chosen people. They had a knowledge of God. They had the Law of Moses and the Prophecies and the Psalms. They had the temple on Mount Zion with its magnificent ritual. They had the synagogue and its services. Highly favoured as these people were, when Jesus saw them He was moved with compassion for them. He was profoundly concerned about them and deeply anxious to do them good. He wanted them to have fellowship with Himself and with the Father.

It is characteristic of the non-Christian faiths that they distrust and despise the common people. Horace said: "I hate the vulgar crowd, and keep it at a distance." The Brahmin regards himself and is regarded by the lower castes as a god. If he washes his feet the people gladly drink the water. John Williams said that in the South Seas the women were not allowed to enter the sacred enclosures. The pigs might; the women could not. Christ's feeling towards every human soul is that of sympathy. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to a knowledge of the truth. He tasted death for every man. He gave Himself a ransom for all. He loves every soul that He purchased with His own blood.

As He saw the multitudes around Him He said to His disciples, "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the labourers are few." The way the people followed Him and pressed upon Him to hear the word and to be healed showed that they were in need of something better than they had. There was no lack of priests or Levites or Scribes or lawyers. There were innumerable teachers and expounders of the law. Yet our Lord could say with absolute truth, "The labourers are

few." The real teachers of the people; the men who know God and have His spirit and know His will; these are a small number. So He said, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers into His harvest." It is for us to consider that many things are done in answer to prayer that will not be done if prayer is omitted. The promise is that those who ask shall receive. Of others it is said, "You have not because you ask not." The Most High God has made the progress of the Kingdom depend in some measure upon the prayers of His children. He has made us partners with Himself; the work to be done cannot be done if we fail to do our duty.

There are two considerations that should lead us to obey this command. One is pity for the lost. Their condition pleads like angels trumpet-tongued on their behalf. Whatever they may think about themselves, the fact is, that they are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and in need of all things. The other is zeal for the Lord's honour and glory. This is His harvest. These lost souls belong to Him. If they are allowed to perish because of a lack of knowledge, He will suffer loss.

We claim that we are Christians, disciples of Jesus Christ. If we are Christians we will think and feel and speak and act as Christ did. We will be imitators of Him; we will walk in His steps. He said to His followers, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." The man in the church who does not go is as guilty as the man outside the church who does not believe when sufficient evidence is presented to him. They shall be condemned together, one because of disobedience, and the other because of disbelief. The great promise is, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." But the questions follow: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in

Him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!" The church must send out a sufficient number of missionary agents to give a knowledge of the gospel to all mankind. The church is set for a light to the nations, and for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth. She cannot keep the light to herself; she must send it out. We are told that, after the ascension of our Lord, the disciples went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with the signs that followed. That is the work of the disciples of Christ now.

If we are really Christians we will have compassion upon those who are distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Our compassion will assume a practical form. We are told that in the dark lands sin is enthroned and deified and worshipped. Crime and sorrow are everywhere. These lands are a waste, howling wilderness. The people are without hope and without God. In Africa bloodshed abounds; Satan is supreme; the darkness is darkest. In India the foundations of social life are utterly rotten, beastly rotten. The foulest ceremonies are carried on in the name of religion. Bishop Foster says, "Paint a starless sky; hang your picture with night; drape the mountains with long, far-reaching vistas of darkness; hang the curtains deep along every shore and landscape; darken all the past; let the future be draped in deeper and yet deeper night; fill the awful gloom with hungry, sad-faced men and sorrow-driven women and children;—it is the heathen world, the people seen in vision by the prophet, who sit in the region and shadow of death, to whom no light has come, sitting there still through the long, long night, waiting and watching for the morning." There is nothing in the non-Christian faiths that can cleanse the soul, nothing that can give peace to the troubled conscience. There is not a man or

woman or child in these dark lands for whom Christ does not have compassion. There is not one that He does not desire to see justified and sanctified and glorified. If we are His disciples we will feel precisely as He feels.

Mrs. Bishop says that the false faiths degrade woman with a degradation that is infinite. They dwarf the intellect and develop the worst passions of the soul—jealousy, envy, murderous hate, intrigue. She was asked two hundred times for some drug that would poison the favourite wife or that would disfigure her son. In China there is a saying, "We may trust deadly poisons, a swollen river, a hurricane, beasts of prey, a thief, a savage, a murderer; but a woman, never." A missionary secretary and some friends were travelling in Persia. In the evening some of the women of the place went into the inn. The women asked the strangers about their homes and their families. Then the strangers asked them about their lives. They said, "Sahibs, our life is hell." That statement was absolutely true. There is not a woman in all the world whose life has been degraded and darkened by paganism or Mohammedanism for whom Christ is not concerned. His desire for her is that she should have every comfort and every honour shown to women in Christian lands. He wishes her life to be bright and full of blessedness. If we are worthy to bear His name we will be concerned about so many hundred millions of women who are regarded as on a level with brute beasts, who are considered as a necessary evil, whose sole excuse for existence is that they may propagate the species and minister to the needs of the male sex.

Scattered all over the world there are earnest souls seeking for God and truth and eternal life. They go on long and weary pilgrimages; they gash themselves with knives; they submit to the most cruel tortures; they sleep on beds of spikes; they starve themselves. They hope in this way to earn pardon and peace. A Hindu said, "I am thirsty—I am thirsting for God. Tell me, tell me, have you seen Him? Can you show

Him to me? I want to know Him." He offered to worship the missionary if he would lead him to God. An aged man said to a missionary, "I have been waiting for forty years to hear what I heard to-day. I felt sure that there was nothing in Buddhism that could save me, but I felt that the great God must have some method by which a poor sinner might find salvation." A Chinese said that from a child his heart was hungry for peace. He went on long journeys on foot to temples of renown, hoping that by seeing the idols he would feel his sins forgiven. He would dust them and clean them and burn much incense before them. But he returned home as dissatisfied as ever. An Indian princess started on a seven years' journey to the four cardinal points of the country, to the four great shrines of the gods. She endured everything; she bathed in all sacred waters; she undertook fasts and penances and privations; she bowed at all shrines, worshipped before all the idols, spent money with lavish and princely munificence. After a season of rest she started on a second tour. She vowed she would sit in the burning sun all day with hot fires raging about her. When the cool season came she vowed she would spend every night in a pond with the water up to her chin. On this tour she heard of salvation through Christ for the first time, and gladly accepted it, and spent the rest of her life in making it known to others. There is not an honest seeker after God and salvation in the whole world for whom Christ has not compassion. He wishes His disciples to help Him give this knowledge to all such. If we would be loyal to Him we will do this.

Three-fourths of mankind live in a perpetual atmosphere of fear. They are afraid to live and afraid to die. Their gods are hostile and are constantly plotting to do them mischief. They have not heard of a God who is a Father and whose highest name is love. When those nearest to them are taken away they have no consolation and good hope through grace.

"Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees!
Who hopeless lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who has not learned in hours of faith
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own."

Christ would have every human soul know where comfort and consolation can be found. He would have all men know that death is the gateway to the life that is life indeed. He would have all men know that He has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Every true disciple of Jesus the Christ will wish the same. He would brighten the great mystery of the grave.

If we are Christians we will pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest. Dr. Broadus says that this is the one specific thing that our Lord instructed His disciples to pray for; and that it is the one petition that is seldom heard in public or private worship. The church has forgotten this command of her Founder. We pray for almost everything else; we seldom pray or hear others pray for labourers for the harvest field. Not long ago a man and wife conferred with us about an appointment. They were young people of ability and culture and consecration. They were well qualified for the work to be done. But there was one obstacle in the way of their going. The woman said that before she entered college her father extorted a promise from her that she would not become a missionary after her college course was finished. He did not bind her not to marry a debauchee or a man out of the church or a French Count or an English Marquis or a Russian Grand Duke or an Italian Princelet; there was only one point about which he was greatly concerned, that was, that she should not serve Christ as a missionary. She knew nothing of missions at that time and not knowing anything did

not care anything, and readily gave her promise. In college she came in touch with the Volunteer Movement. She wanted to go out as a missionary, but her promise to her father stood in the way and he held her to it. So while their hearts were in this cause they could not go. We are not to think that her father is a bad man. He is not a bad man; he is a good man. He is and has been for many years a preacher of the gospel. But he had overlooked this command of his Lord. Had he been offering that petition all his life, he would have thanked and praised God when his child felt called to serve as a missionary. When another woman and her husband volunteered for China her father was asked if he did not protest against her going. He said that he had been preaching and praying for missions for forty years; he had been urging gifted and educated young people to give their lives to propagate the gospel in the regions beyond; how could he consistently oppose when one of his own household offered herself for the service? So far from protesting he felt that an honour had been done him and his family such as could not have been done by all the kings and nobles in the world.

John G. Paton said that when he volunteered for the New Hebrides, he was besieged with the strongest opposition on all sides. His teacher in divinity, the minister of the church under which he was serving as a city missionary, repeatedly urged him to remain at home. He insisted that he was leaving a certainty for an uncertainty. He was leaving a work in which God had made him greatly useful for a work in which he might fail to be useful, and only throw his life away among cannibals. Among all his friends there were only two who encouraged him to go out. He spoke to his parents about the matter. They told him that when he was born they laid him upon the altar to be consecrated, if God saw fit, as a missionary of the cross, and that it had been their constant prayer that he might be prepared, qualified, and led to this very decision, and that God might accept their offering, long spare

him, and give him many souls from among the heathen for his hire. Dr. Chamberlain says that his mother was the instrument of sending eleven of her sons and daughters and nephews and nieces into the foreign field. When he had, with his father and mother's blessing, consecrated himself to this work and was leaving for India, he learned for the first time, that his mother as her first act after the birth of her eldest son, had placed him before the Lord and vowed that he should, so far as her consecration and influence could go, be a foreign missionary. If all parents did so there would be workers enough for every field. Unfortunately this is not the case. The greatest obstacle of the British Student Volunteer Movement is that parents are unwilling that their children should become foreign missionaries. Those who go out have to go in spite of the protests and tears of their parents. That is true in America also. Young men of special promise are urged by their families and friends to enter some profession or some business that promises larger financial returns than the ministry. Not only is prayer not offered for more labourers; the prayers that are offered look in the opposite direction.

This helps to account for the lack of young men for the pulpit. This wail is coming up from all the churches and from all parts of the country. One Eastern Theological school that formerly had a hundred students now has only four. Our own churches are in urgent need of a thousand men to carry on the work that has been inaugurated. Other men are needed to undertake new work. The truth is, that the churches have overlooked or forgotten our Lord's injunction. They are lamenting the lack of men, but are not acting in the only way that promises an adequate supply. They do not feel the urgency of the case. They do not recognize the need of haste and constraint. They are not asking God to thrust men out under the pressure of a great conviction. If a strong church wants a good man for its pulpit it does not hesitate to rob another church. This is done without regard to the

Golden Rule. A stranger from another planet entering one of our churches would not be impressed with the thought that the average church regarded itself as a recruiting station, and that every minister and Sunday-school superintendent regarded himself as a recruiting agent. It is for this reason that the supply of men for the ministry at home and for the field abroad is so inadequate. The Lord will not raise up men in sufficient numbers so long as the church fails to realize the need to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest. If He should send them the church would not employ and support them. The present dearth of men is the natural and direct result of a conspicuous lack of prayer. There is only one way in which this dearth can be overcome. Our Lord has pointed out that way. When the church heeds His command and asks in faith and in earnest the men needed for every field will be forthcoming.

V

THE MISSIONARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.—MATT. 6 : 9–13.

OUR Lord had just referred to the way the Gentiles prayed. They used vain repetitions, thinking they would be heard for their much speaking. They believed that, by saying the same prayer a great many times, they would earn what they expected to receive. Our Lord said to His disciples, "Be not therefore like unto them ; for your Father knoweth what things you have need of before you ask Him." The prayer He taught them is remarkable for its form and for its contents. It is brief and is expressed in words that a child can understand. At the same time it is so comprehensive that it is a summary of all the principal matters for which we should pray. Marcus Dods says it would take a lifetime to fill these words with all their meaning, and eternity to give them their answer. The Lord's Prayer has been spoken of as "this pearl of great price, this purest crystal of devotion, to be a possession of His people forever, never to lose its lustre through millenniums of daily use ; its beauty and preciousness becoming more and more manifest to each successive generation."

In this model prayer there are six petitions. These are divided into two groups of three each. The first group refers to

God, to the hallowing of His name, the coming of His kingdom, the doing of His will. The second group refers to our own needs, daily bread, forgiveness, guidance and deliverance. Only one petition in this prayer has respect to any bodily need. The order of these petitions is significant; it doubtless was intended to guide us in our praying. We are half way to the end before we make any personal request. We are thus taught that, in praying, the things of God should come first, His honour, His glory, His supremacy. We see where He places the emphasis, and where we should place it. Our first concern should not be about food and raiment, but about the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

As Christians we are to pray for ourselves, but if we are content with that we shall fail of the grace of God. "Religion," it has been said, "is indeed a personal thing, but it is not therefore a principle of social isolation. We must visit the closet; but into the closet we must carry the sympathies of the race, and bare before God a heart that can take in the whole world in its wide reach of intercession and fraternal regard." The first words of this prayer, "*Our* Father," show this. The same thing appears in the petitions, "Give *us* this day our daily bread"; "Forgive *us* our debts"; "Bring *us* not into temptation"; "Deliver *us* from the evil one." At the throne of grace selfishness is out of place. A Christian seeks for blessing that he may be a channel of blessing.

> "Who seeks for heaven alone to save his soul
> May keep the path, but will not reach the goal;
> While he who walks in love may wander far,
> Yet God will bring him where the blessed are."

The missionary significance of this prayer is on the surface and is evident to all who have eyes to see. The first three petitions are clearly and unmistakably missionary in their character; the second three are scarcely less so.

When the disciples prayed they were to say:—

I. "*Our Father who art in heaven.*" No Old Testament saint addressed God in this fashion. Abraham was a friend of God; Moses knew God face to face; David was a man after God's own heart; but no one of these said, "Our Father." No pagan addressed his god so. The gods of the heathen were capricious, unjust, unloving; they had no deep and abiding interest in the welfare of mankind. It was not with such gods that the disciples had to do; but with a Father who knew their needs before they expressed them, and who was both able and willing to supply every need according to His own riches in glory. In this same sermon Jesus said, "Or what man is there of you, who, if his *son* shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Because God is our Father He will withhold no good thing from us; He will turn every event to our advantage; He will do for us far exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. Our Lord addressed God as "My Father"; He taught us to address Him as "Our Father." Love is the essence of fatherhood, and God is love. It is because He is our Father that we can approach Him in the fullest assurance that He will hear and answer.

II. "*Hallowed be Thy name.*" The name of God expresses His character as He has been pleased to reveal it. To Moses He said, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by the name of Jehovah I was not known to them." Here was a new disclosure of the divine nature. "Jehovah" signified the eternal and unchangeable one, who is, and who was, and who is to come. Later on He revealed Himself as the holy one of Israel. Later still He revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, who is the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance. Christ embraced and expressed His entire perfection.

So He could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "If ye had known Me ye would have known My Father also; from henceforth ye have known Him and have seen Him."

We cannot make the divine name holy; it is holy. The seraphim said, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts." But we can consider His name as holy, and reverence it as such. We hallow God's name when we dismiss all unworthy conceptions of His character, and regard Him as a being of infinite holiness, goodness, power, and love; when we regard His revelation of Himself as the one supreme standard of truth and righteousness; when we show Him the obedience and devotion due Him. "We hallow His name when we display holiness in our whole being and character, inwardly and outwardly, so that disposition, word and deed are regulated by the acknowledged perfection of God and brought into harmony with it." We hallow His name when we make Him known to others and show them that He is worthy of their love and trust and service. "Those that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." To a missionary who was telling the people of God it was said, "Had we known Him we would be worshipping Him." Many are seeking after God as others are seeking for the prizes of this life. They go on long pilgrimages; they worship in the temples and burn incense before the idols; they fast and pray. They say, "My soul is athirst for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" We can hallow the divine name by giving these earnest souls a knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. There are those who stand aloof from God and profane His name because they are ignorant of Him. They think He is a hard master; that He requires them to forego innocent pleasures and things they highly prize. They think His service is bondage and weariness. They do not know that in His presence there is fullness of joy, that at His right hand are pleasures forevermore. We hallow His name by publishing the truth.

We dishonour God by dismissing Him from our thought; by acting as if He did not know or care how we conduct ourselves. Paul told his own people that the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles because of them. Their immoral conduct convinced the Gentiles that they had an immoral God and Lawgiver. For this reason they spoke of Him with contempt. If we offer this petition, "Hallowed be Thy name," the effect of our lives will be the opposite of this. God's name will be honoured by all with whom we have to do.

III. "*Thy Kingdom come.*" Daniel foretold that the God of heaven would set up a kingdom, which would never be destroyed, and this kingdom would not be left to other people, but it would break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, and it would stand forever. Bruce speaks of this kingdom as the reign of divine love exercised by God in His grace over human hearts believing in His love, and constrained thereby to yield Him grateful affection and devoted service. Our Lord had much to say about the kingdom. Most of His parables had to do with it. Each one sets forth some phase of it. It was like the hidden treasure which men would willingly buy with all their possessions. It was like the precious pearl for which all else would be exchanged. The kingdom was the chief good. The character of the kingdom was foretold. It was to be all righteous. Violence and destruction would be unknown within its borders. It was to be a universal kingdom. God had said, "I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth." Many shall come from the East and from the West and from the North and from the South, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God.

The kingdom was set up on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was poured out because Jesus the crucified was glorified. But until He is recognized by all peoples as King of kings and Lord of lords, until He fills and controls all institutions and all souls, it would seem that this petition can be ap-

propriately offered. This petition refers to its further growth and the more perfect development of its principles. It refers to "the full and final establishment of God's realm, in which all men will do Him willing service, and all habits and customs, individual and social, will be such as He approves."

It goes with the saying that the great majority of mankind do not now hallow the name of the Most High; that among them His kingdom has not been established. Two-thirds of the race adhere to the non-Christian faiths. They look to Buddha and Confucius and Zoroaster and Laotsze and Mohammed and not to Jesus of Nazareth for guidance in all religious matters. They serve other gods and do things that are evil and injurious to themselves and to others. As long as there is idolatry, and polygamy, and infanticide, and slavery, and cruelty, and dishonesty, and anger, and malice, and hatred in the world; as long as the great prophecies concerning the world-wide conquest of the kingdom are unfulfilled, this prayer can and should be offered, "Thy Kingdom come." "To this end let the gospel be preached to all and be embraced by all. Let all be brought to subscribe to the record that God has given of His Son, and to accept Him as their Saviour and Sovereign. Let the bounds of the church be enlarged, and the kingdoms of the world be made Christ's kingdom and all men become subjects of it, and live as becomes their character."

There was a Jewish proverb that said, "There is no prayer where there is no mention of the kingdom." The coming of the kingdom was the supreme object of pious longing. The Old Testament saints put the kingdom first in their thought and in their prayer. Our Lord did the same. With the Gentiles the great questions were, "What shall I eat? What shall I drink? Wherewithal shall I be clothed?" There was no consuming desire that the names of their gods should be hallowed, or that their kingdom should come, or that their will should be done. Their stomach was their chief deity. Their first concern was to fill their mouths. Our Lord would have

His disciples seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness. If they would do this all needed things would be added to them. The heavenly Father knew that they had need of these things. He would not forget or fail them if they would seek the kingdom and its interests first.

IV. "*Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.*" God's nature expresses itself in His will. He is absolutely holy and loving; His will is the same. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to a knowledge of the truth. This is His will concerning us, even our sanctification. He wills all that is best for His children. He wills a perfect social order. He anticipates the time when injustice and iniquity shall pass away forever, and when every soul born into this world shall have a chance to live a complete life. "As in heaven, so on earth." This is the divine ideal. It is said of angels that excel in strength, that they do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word.

God's will is done in the natural world. There is seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night. The moon knows her appointed seasons, and the sun his going down. Fire and hail, snow and vapour, and the stormy wind fulfill His word. It is much to be desired that God's will be done in the moral sphere as it is in the natural. Our Lord did not ask us to pray for this good thing or that, but that God's will be done. We can pray for nothing higher than that His will be done on earth heartily, joyfully, everlastingly. Compliance with His will is the highest wisdom. Compliance with His will secures for us all good things. Because we are in the image of God we have wills of our own, and can defy the Omnipotent. It is because we are what we are and not brute beasts or inanimate objects that sin is in the world. By a proper exercise of our wills we can yield ourselves to God and spend and be spent in His delightful service.

Our Lord said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work." "My Father loves Me because I

always do those things that please Him." "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." "Not My will, but Thine be done." The petition He taught His disciples to offer He illustrated in His own life. He did God's will at any cost. He saw the people forsaking Him; He saw the shadow of the cross; He saw the bitter cup He must drink; but He went forward unmoved. What He did He would have all men do. If God's will were done by all created intelligences, there would not be such a thing as a heathen temple, or a heathen idol, or an unevangelized race, or an unchristian home, or an unsaved soul in the universe. There would not be a saloon, or a gambling den, or a jail, or a reformatory, or a police court, or a sweat shop, or a slum, or a standing army, or a battleship. There would be nothing to degrade or to destroy. Everything would have a tendency to uplift and to ennoble. All the families of the earth would be blessed and would be a blessing. The nations would be all righteous. There would be the new heaven and the new earth, foretold by bards and seers. God's eternal purpose would be accomplished. This it is that we are to pray for, that God's will may be done everywhere and always and by all.

V. "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" Man does not live by bread alone; neither does he live without bread. Nourishing bread satisfies hunger and strengthens us for the time to come. It enables us to fill our places in the Kingdom and to do those things that please God. It is *daily* bread for which we are to pray and not great riches. Agur prayed, "Feed me with the food that is needful for me; lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, 'Who is Jehovah?' Or lest I be poor, and steal, and use profanely the name of my God." The two classes that are hardest to reach with the gospel are the very rich and the very poor. One class is burdened with too much; the other is embittered because of too little. The Christian life is one of trust. It is well that we should live in

habitual dependence upon God. If we do this we shall never come to want. He is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. He opens His hand and supplies the wants of every living thing. He hears the young ravens when they cry. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. He will never leave us nor forsake us. The treasures of the universe are in His hands. Giving does not impoverish Him; withholding does not enrich Him. He is able to make all grace abound towards us, that we always having all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work."

Heine said, "We are of age now, and do not need a Father's care." Many think they are dependent upon their own efforts alone for their daily food. But is it so? To be sure, He does not rain down manna to-day. He does not multiply the loaves and fishes for us. But when we plant and water it is God that gives the increase. He gives the warm earth, and the living seed, and the genial sunshine and the refreshing rain. The farm products of the American people last year were worth more than six billions of dollars; without God's part they would not have been worth six mills. He causes the seed to grow and the fruit to ripen. It is in God that we live and move and have our being. It is God who gives us power to get wealth. Apart from Him we plan and labour in vain.

> "Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
> And back of the flour is the mill;
> And back of the mill is the wheat and the shower
> And the sun and the Father's will."

VI. "*Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.*" It was moral debts that our Lord had in mind. This is clear from what follows on this topic. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses."

Forgiveness of sin is a vital matter because sin alienates us from the life of God. Sin must be put away if we would have any place in the Kingdom. Sin disqualifies us for service. While sin is indulged in or the guilt of sin is unpurged we cannot run in the way of God's commandments; we cannot delight ourselves in God, and God cannot delight Himself in us. There can be no constancy and no heartiness and no blessedness in any service we may seek to render. This is true of sins that are negative and of sins that are positive in their nature, of sins of omission and of commission. If we would do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven, sin must be forgiven. That clears the past and lays the foundation for what is to come. "Blessed is the man whose transgression is hid, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes not iniquity." He is prepared for service and for blessedness as the man whose sin remains is not and cannot be. Forgiveness is not everything. We need to be energized for all the way and work of life as much as we need to be cleansed. But forgiveness is essential. The ship must weigh anchor before she can start on her voyage.

VII. "*And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*" Our Lord here refers to situations and circumstances that furnish occasion for sinning. Elsewhere He said to His disciples, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." There are evil propensities and passions in our nature. When we would do good evil is powerfully present with us. So it comes to pass that the good we would we do not; and the evil we would not, that we practice. Because of the inherent weakness of the flesh we are in constant danger of being led astray. This being the case this petition has a rightful place in this prayer. "In offering this petition we are asking God to so order our lives that we shall have the least temptation to sin; that we may be called to fill positions in

which there may be the least opportunity of gratifying those of our inclinations to sin which are the strongest, and in which the opposite tendencies may be most easily and most effectively matured." There are those whose society leads in the wrong direction. In their presence it is almost impossible to live as we should. There are places in which the same is true. In her youth, so it is said, George Eliot was a guest in a skeptical home for some months. Nothing was said against Christianity. But in that atmosphere her faith was undermined. No attack was made on her views. No effort was made to convert her. But she left that house a different woman from what she was when she entered it. In this prayer we ask God not to bring us into such society or into such places.

There are others whose society makes us ashamed of all that is small and mean and unworthy, and that makes us eager to do the best of which we are capable. They act on us like a tonic or a cold bath or a mountain breeze. We cannot go near them without feeling a new impulse to live as we know we should. Lord Peterborough, after living for some time with the saintly Fenelon, said, "If I remain here much longer I will become a Christian in spite of myself." A bookseller had in his room a picture of F. W. Robertson, the great preacher. He said, "When I am tempted to do a wrong act I look at that face and the temptation is at an end." There are places that effect us the same way. We feel a certain moral elevation such as one feels in a cathedral. The soul aspires to something larger and better than it has ever experienced. It is into such society and such places that we would be brought.

We are surprised at times. We meet temptation when we are not looking for it and when we are not prepared to withstand it. That was Peter's condition when he denied his Lord. He was not expecting to be challenged. If he had been on his guard it is likely that he would have gone to prison and to death rather than do what he did. When we pray, "Bring us not into temptation" we are asking to be pro-

tected against sudden attacks. We cannot and we ought not to expect to escape temptation altogether. But we can refuse to parley with it, or to put ourselves in its way; we can fortify ourselves against it. If we pray against it God is faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.

This is not all. The other clause of this petition says, "Deliver us from the evil one." The thought here is that of rescue. If we should be taken by surprise and held by the enemy, He will pluck us out of his hands. Peter was thus rescued. He fell into sin, but he repented and wept bitterly. We know what followed. The Lord restored him to his place in His favour and among the apostles and gave him the keys of the Kingdom. Peter opened the door to both Jew and Gentile. Under his first sermon three thousand were won to the faith. Myriads of others who have yielded to temptation have been rescued from the clutches of the evil one, and have been made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

This prayer teaches and all Scripture reinforces the teaching that the Kingdom is to be considered first. Its claims are to be answered first. Its needs are to be attended to first. That is what Livingstone did. He placed no value on anything he had or might have except in relation to the kingdom of God. Whatever he had would be given or kept according as by giving or keeping he could do most to further the interests of his Lord. Carey's thought was the same. The kingdom was first; he cobbled shoes to pay expenses. Paul had the same conception. He held his life of no account to himself if he could finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

This is as it should be with all. But is it so? Churches are ready to do anything for themselves. They provide everything that is needed and often a great deal more. No expendi-

ture is too great. With many churches there is no concern for anything beyond their own little and local affairs. The services are all based on the primacy and preëminence of the local work. There is little thought of anything beyond that. There is no passion for the world-wide spread and the complete supremacy of the kingdom. There is no consuming desire that to Christ every knee shall bow. What is done to give the gospel to the nations is done by a few, and not by the entire body of believers. One church gives a million and a quarter of dollars in twenty years. Only one-fifth of that amount is spent upon itself; the rest is used for city missions, for home missions and for foreign missions. That church is an exception to the general rule. More than half the Christian people alive to-day do nothing to help Christ accomplish His purpose. It should be far otherwise. It would be far otherwise if we prayed "after this manner." At the close of the Franco-German war French nobles wore coarse and cheap clothing. They said they must do that till the indemnity was paid and France was free. The people of Japan made many and great sacrifices that the army might be victorious over Russia. They would have thought it a shameful thing for them to live in luxury while the very life of the nation was at stake. The national welfare came first. They were ready for any service and for any sacrifice that Japan might have an honoured place among the nations of the world. It would be so now if all believers felt and acted as they should feel and act. If they would put that first which Christ put first, there would be no lack of men or means for the work of the world's evangelization. In that case God's name would be known and hallowed among all peoples; His kingdom would fill the whole earth; and His will would be done by all men everywhere as it is done in heaven.

The gracious promise is, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "Wherever two of you agree as touching anything it shall be

done of My Father who is in heaven." "If ye ask anything in My name, I will do it." "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." The privilege of prayer is ours. The power to effect great results is ours. For while we pray God acts. He says, "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." "Thus to a child of God bowed in prayer that the gospel may be sent to all lands, though he may not see it, yet as he prays *God* baffles the powers of darkness; as he prays *God* moves in the hearts of kings; as he prays *God* breaks down the barriers to evangelization; as he prays *God* opens up the pathway to forbidden lands; as he prays *God* unclasps the purses of his children; as he prays *God* raises up and thrusts forth the gospel messengers to the whitened harvests." This is our privilege. If the whole church will use it we shall see the whole world evangelized in a generation or in less time. God help us to pray as we have been taught.

VI

FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES

John 6 : 1–14

I THINK it worthy of remark that, of all the miracles wrought by our Lord, this is the only one of which we have a fourfold record. The evangelists had seen Him open the eyes of the blind and unstop the ears of the deaf; they had seen Him cleanse the leper, heal the demoniac, the palsied, the withered, the impotent, the lunatic, the epileptic; they had seen Him raise the dead: but this was the only one of His mighty works that so impressed all four that each one has given us an account of it. When we study this miracle and note its effect upon those who witnessed it and read the marvellous discourse on the Bread of Life that follows and that is based upon it, I think we begin to understand why all four evangelists were so profoundly impressed by it.

Let us endeavour to call up the scene. They were in a desert place. A great multitude was present. Men were there; women were there; children were there. The people in that part of the country heard that the great Teacher was in their neighbourhood and they ran out to meet Him. The caravans going up to the Passover feast turned aside to see Him and to hear the gracious words that fell from His lips. They had been there for three days. They were tired and hungry and had nothing to eat. The problem was how to feed so many in that desert place. If they should be dismissed in their then exhausted condition they would faint by the way. Our Lord knew what He was about to do; but He asked His disciples what they had to propose. He did this in order to test and to develop their faith.

Several suggestions were made in answer to His inquiry. The first was this, "Send them away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food." The man who said that felt something like this, "These people are not our guests. They did not come here in response to our invitation. We are under no obligation to supply their needs. Their condition is their affair, not ours. Let them go into the country round-about and buy themselves food and secure shelter for the night." Another said, "If we had money enough we would gladly relieve the necessities of these people. But it would take two hundred shillings to do that, and we do not have that much money in our treasury." A third intimated that he had been conducting a quiet investigation and all he could discover in the company were five barley cakes and two small fish. "But what are these among so many?" To his mind it was preposterous and absurd to think of doing anything with that slender stock of provisions among such a great host of famished people.

To my mind the pathos of this situation arises not from the fact that there were so many people present, and that they were weary and hungry, and that they had no food and no funds with which to buy food; the pathos of the situation arises from the fact that the disciples had no faith in their Lord as a source of supply. They had been with Him for some considerable time. They had heard Him speak as man never spoke. They had seen Him do things that had not been done since the world began. But in this new emergency it does not appear that one of them thought of His ability to meet it. It did not occur to Peter or to James or to John or to any other follower that in some Divine way He would be able to feed these multitudes. They took stock of what they had. They knew it was inadequate. Their conclusion was that nothing could be done. To their thought the case was hopeless. Therein lies the pathos of the situation.

Let us note our Lord's attitude and action in the premises.

It is said that when He saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion for them. His great loving heart went out in sympathy towards them in their need. And when the suggestion was made that He send them away that they might go into the villages and buy themselves food, He said, "They need not depart. Give ye them to eat." He recognized the fact that these people were there to hear His teaching and for no other purpose. It was for Him and for those who stood closest to Him to act the host. And when the plea of inability was urged He inquired what they had. When they told Him that they had only five loaves and two fishes He said, "Bring what you have to Me." When they brought it He told the disciples to cause the people to sit down in companies on the grass. This was that the work of feeding might be facilitated and that no one might be overlooked. When all were seated He gave thanks to God for the bread and for the fish. Then He began to break and to distribute to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. In His Divine fingers the bread was multiplied as if by magic and the fish was multiplied so that there was no need of doling them out; there was no need of any one eating sparingly. The record said that they did all eat as much as they would. Two of the evangelists said that they ate till they were gorged. It was like a Christmas or a Thanksgiving dinner where people eat till they are filled up to the throat and can eat no more. Matthew says, "And they that did eat were about five thousand men, besides women and children." It has occurred to me that the last clause is added because women and children eat as much as men, if not more. This touch helps us to understand the greatness of the miracle. Probably ten thousand people were fed in that desert place as the sun was going down. Then the Teacher said, "Gather up the broken pieces which remain over that nothing be lost." The fragments filled twelve great wicker baskets full. That which remained over was a hundred times as much as they had in hand when the work of feeding began.

This is one of the greatest missionary lessons in the Word of God. Two-thirds of the race are without the gospel. They are weary of their false faiths. They are starving for the bread of life. And the question which our Lord is asking the church is this, "How are these souls to be fed?" Substantially the same answers are made now that were made that evening as the sun was going down. Some say, "Send them away. We are not responsible for their ignorance and superstition and idolatry and savagery. If they are hungry for something better than they have let them go where it is and get it." More than half the churches in America say that or something like that. Others say, "If we had money enough we would be willing to do something. If we were all Rockefellers or Carnegies or Morgans we would contribute something to send the gospel to those who are without hope because without a knowledge of God. But by the time we pay our minister and our chorister and organist and soloist and our janitor and keep our property clean and comfortable and in good repair, our funds are exhausted. By the time we meet all our local current expenses we have given all that we are able to give." Others say, "To be sure we could do a little; but what we could do is so small that it is not worth while What is it among a thousand millions without the gospel?" Each year hundreds of churches make offerings, but because they are so small they are not forwarded to the missionary treasury. They are turned over to the general fund and the society gets nothing.

Here, as in the other case, the pathos arises not from the fact that two-thirds of the race are without the gospel, nor from the fact that the church is not made up of millionaires; it arises from our lack of faith in God. We forget that this is His work, and not ours. We forget that He is the chief partner in the concern and that He is pledged to see the enterprise through, and that He will do so if only we do our part. We forget that the treasures of the universe are in His hands and that therefore He is abundantly able to finance the scheme.

We take stock of our resources and we say that what is proposed is impossible.

Let us think for a moment of our Lord's relation to this cause to-day. Now as then He has compassion on the multitudes. He died for every one of them on the cross and He is not willing that any one of them should perish. And when the church says, "Send them away," He says, "They need not depart; you give them to eat." That is the chief end of your existence. You cannot get rid of your responsibility. And when the church pleads poverty as an excuse for her inaction, He says, "What have you?" And when the church points to her little store, He says, "Bring it to Me." If the church will do that He will multiply it and make it sufficient. With His blessing upon it there will be no lack. There will be enough and to spare for the whole wide world. All that is necessary is that we place what we have in His hands.

Two thoughts have been suggested to my mind while studying the account of this miracle. The first is this, Increase is the reward of fidelity. It is when we use what we have that the Lord entrusts us with more. He does not give us all that we need in a lump, and in advance. If He did, we might forget Him or fail to put our trust in Him. He wants us to confide in Him, and He has assured us that if we do we shall lack no good thing. He takes delight in showing us what great results He can bring from the very smallest beginnings. I do not know of any great cause where all the funds needed for its support were in hand when it began. Some soul was faithful and did all he could and God raised up others to help, and sent the money to defray the necessary expenses.

That is the way churches are built. It seldom happens that all the funds required are in hand when the building operations are commenced. Some years ago a little band of believers met for worship in an upper room. The surroundings were most unfavourable. This church called a young man of faith and vision to be their minister. He told the church that they

could never build up a strong congregation in such circumstances. He urged that they buy a lot at once. They said to him, "We are only a dozen in number, and we are all working people. It will take two thousand dollars to buy a suitable lot; where can we get that amount of money?" He said, "I do not know, but I believe that, if we do all we are able, God will come to our assistance." Under such inspiring leadership they bought a lot. The neighbours said, "These people are making heroic sacrifices; we must help them." They did so and before any one knew it all the money needed was in hand. Then the minister said, "Let us now proceed to put up a chapel." They said, "It will take five thousand dollars to erect a chapel; where can we get five thousand dollars?" He said again, "I do not know, but I believe that, if we will give all we can, the Lord will come to our help." Encouraged by his contagious faith they began to build. In course of time the chapel was built and dedicated. Little by little the money was secured to liquidate the indebtedness. God rewarded the faith of that man and the band of believers associated with him. Since then a commodious and comfortable house of worship has been built, and the chapel is used for Sunday-school purposes. These people honoured God by doing what they were able to do, and He honoured them by putting it into their power to do far more than they were able to do when the good work began. All through those years of struggle the church made its missionary offerings. When the minister was asked how this worked out, he said, "For every dollar we sent out, God sent us ten from sources from which we never expected a penny."

The great movement that has been such a blessing to young men and young women is the outcome of the fidelity of a dry-goods clerk in London. George Williams undertook to lead another clerk to Christ. By God's grace he succeeded. The two sought the conversion of a third. The Lord prospered their efforts. The three met for prayer and for Bible study. That was the germ of the Young Men's Christian Association.

This organization has now seven thousand branches. It is represented in almost every city in Christendom and in many cities of the non-Christian world. Millions of young men have been saved and have been helped into a larger life and a nobler service by this institution. One young clerk was faithful, and God was with him and made him one of the foremost benefactors of the race. The whole world enjoys the benefits of his fidelity.

The missionary work of modern times began with a cobbler. William Carey was not a university man. He had neither money nor social position. His wife was partially insane. But William Carey discovered the will of God for himself and for the church. He pleaded that something might be done. He urged the church to expect great things from God and to attempt great things for God. He did what he could. He collected facts and published them. He spoke on the subject in public and in private. He volunteered to go to India. All he asked was that his passage be paid. He assured his brethren that, if they would do that, he would support himself. God was with him according to His own gracious promise. William Carey was called to teach in the government college and paid a handsome salary by men who were opposed to the work in which he was engaged. His salary enabled him to work on a far larger scale than otherwise. His presentation of the claims of the work led Marshman and Ward and others to join him in the work. The whole church listened to his message and the great missionary propaganda of our day is largely the result of William Carey's obedience to the heavenly vision.

Thomas Campbell was an Irish immigrant. He settled in the wilds of western Pennsylvania. He had no money and no influential friends. It is doubtful if he ever had a bank account or as much as one thousand dollars in his possession at any time in his life. But Thomas Campbell had something better than money and friends. He had a great truth. He

discovered the seventeenth chapter of John, a discovery that has been pronounced as great and as fruitful as the discovery of the New World by Columbus. In a log cabin Thomas Campbell elaborated the truth God revealed to him and gave the world that immortal document entitled "The Declaration and Address." This truth found a lodgment in other hearts, and they became its joyful slaves. While he was reading the proof-sheets his gifted son arrived from Ireland and pledged his life to the advocacy of the principles contained in it. Innumerable friends and champions were raised up; funds were contributed; and the world knows the results. One of the largest religious communions in existence is the outcome. It has been said that there is not a religious body in Christendom that has not been profoundly affected by this movement that originated in the mind and heart of Thomas Campbell.

The second thought is this, We are enriched and not impoverished by what we give and do for the Lord's work. The young lad who had the five barley cakes and the two small fishes might have said, "Charity begins at home," and have eaten them. No one would have blamed him much. That would have satisfied his appetite for a time. But in an hour or two he would have been as empty and as hungry as before. As it was he got a full meal; ten thousand other people got a full meal each; and there was enough left over to feed a regiment. Had there been no sacrifice there would have been no increase. So we are told that there is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet and it tendeth to poverty. In the Sermon on the Mount we read, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom." Those who sow bountifully have the sure word of promise that they shall reap also bountifully. God takes pleasure in honouring those who honour Him. He rewards those who give of their time or substance to advance the interests of the Kingdom.

The church with which the writer is associated has been engaged in missionary work for nearly sixty years. In that time we have expended between ten and twenty millions of dollars in the support of this cause. Are we weaker and poorer because of this vast outlay? Are we not immensely richer and stronger? When we began we were a feeble folk. We did not number over two hundred thousand. Now we number a million and three hundred thousand. We have grown in numbers and in wealth. We have gained in every respect. We have given to the Lord's work and He has given back to us. Had we not given we would have been scattered and destroyed. Our very name would have perished from the earth. Our missionary work has been our salvation.

One of our churches decided to build a parsonage for its minister. A desirable lot was selected. A committee called on the owner of the lot and offered him a fair price for it. The owner was not a Christian. He was rich and did not wish to sell. It appears that he did not learn from the committee what they wanted the lot for. Some days later he sent for the committee and asked what they proposed to build on this lot. They told him that they wanted to build a parsonage. He said, "That puts a different face on the matter." After a moment's reflection he said, "You offered me as much for the lot as it is worth and I refused your offer. I will tell you what I will do; I will give you the lot." He had a deed made out and presented it to them. The secret of that man's action was this, That is a great church. It is neither large nor rich; but it does great things. It supports a missionary on the foreign field. It gives on a large scale for the work in America. The banker knew that, and God put it into his heart to help that people. God rewards work well done by giving us more work to do and by giving us the ability to do it. That evening in the desert the company gave all they had, and our Lord blessed it and increased it and made it ample for the needs of all.

God is able to make all grace abound towards us, that we

always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work. His desire for us is that we understand His program and avail ourselves of all the infinite treasures that are in Him. Years ago, so the story runs, it was proposed to tap one of the mountain lakes in Scotland, to supply the city of Stirling with water. The people living near the lake objected and fought the proposal in the courts. They feared that tapping the lake would so exhaust its waters that their property would be of no value. In spite of their objection the pipes were laid and Stirling was supplied with water. For a few days the water in the lake fell a few inches; then it rose and stood at a somewhat higher level than before. The engineers discovered that in tapping the lake they had opened some inexhaustible fountains in the hills. So it came to pass that after supplying the city they had more water than ever. That is the way God works. Giving does not impoverish Him; withholding does not enrich Him. He delights to show His people what He can do and what He will do if only they will act in all good fidelity.

"Make channels for the streams of love,
Where they may broadly run;
And love has overflowing streams
To fill them every one.

"For we must share if we would keep
That good gift from above;
Ceasing to share we cease to have
Such is the law of love."

VII

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

LUKE 10: 25–37

THE lawyer mentioned in this passage wished to test the ability and the orthodoxy of our Lord. There is no evidence of malicious intention; he was not seeking, as some critics and enemies did, to entangle Him in His talk. He had heard of His fame as a teacher in Galilee, and he wished to put Him to the proof. It may be that he wished to air his own knowledge also and to show his skill in debate, and for this reason undertook to fence with Jesus. He proposed the question of all questions, "Doing what good thing shall I inherit eternal life?" Had he been seeking information our Lord would have given him a direct answer. But reading his heart and purpose He answered one question with another. This man was a student and expounder of the Mosaic Law. Our Lord's question was this, "In the law, what is written? How readest thou?" The lawyer promptly quoted two passages, which are an admirable summary of all that Moses taught. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Our Lord said, "Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live." The comment implied that, though the lawyer was a professional teacher of the law, he had not lived according to the law. The lawyer's conscience was touched. He felt that he was on the defensive. He stood up to test our Lord; he now recognized that he was being weighed in the balances and was found wanting. The record states that he, desiring to justify

himself, or to set himself right, said unto Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" There was no thought that he was lacking in his duty towards God. Doubtless he paid tithes of all that he possessed. He kept the fasts and the feasts prescribed by Moses. He prayed much. The only question was as to his neighbour. To the Jewish mind, we are told, that neighbour was Jew writ large. The lawyer wished a statement from the Prophet of Galilee on this subject. Who had claims upon him? Trench says the question shows how little the man knew of that love whose essence is that it owns no limit except its own ability to proceed farther and to do more. What the lawyer needed was that his eye should be taken from those to whom love should be shown and turned in upon him who should show this love. It was the purpose of the parable that follows to do this.

In response to the question, "And who is my neighbour?" our Lord said, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho." He did not say whether the man was rich or poor, learned or ignorant. The natural inference is that the man was a Jew, though even that is not stated. The only thing said is that he was a man. He was a human being, and as such had claims upon other members of the race. This man fell among robbers, who both stripped him, and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. The road was through a desolate and rocky region. The sharp turns and the projecting rocks enabled the robbers to take a traveller by surprise, and to get away with their plunder and escape capture and punishment. The road was called the "Bloody Way" because of the deeds of blood done in it. To this day no one goes from Jerusalem to Jericho without an armed Turkish escort. The robbers were not satisfied with relieving their victim of his purse; they took his clothing also. And because he resisted, or out of sheer cruelty, they beat him and left him half dead.

"And by chance a certain priest was going down that way."

Jericho had many priests living within its walls. When the time came for them to minister in the temple they went up to Jerusalem. When they finished their course they returned to their homes. On seeing the wounded man this priest passed by on the other side. He did not stop to inquire if he could render any assistance. He did not even hesitate, but kept right on in his journey. However unfriendly the Jews were to the rest of the world, they were usually ready to pity and to help members of their own race. The priest was obliged by his profession to show compassion. This redeeming grace is wanting here. The law went farther and said, "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again." Here it was not an ass or an ox, but a brother Jew that needed instant help, for his life was fast ebbing away. This particular priest may have been very diligent and faithful to his duties in the temple, but he did not illustrate in his practice those great words, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." He may and very likely did tithe mint and cummin and anise and fast twice a week, but he omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy and faith.

The priest was able to excuse his heartless conduct to himself. The robbers might be near at hand and ready to pounce upon him if he should stay to assist the dying man. They might strip and beat him and depart, leaving him half or wholly dead. There was danger in stopping. The law of self-preservation led him to continue his course with all possible speed and without regard to the condition of his countryman and coreligionist. Besides, the sufferer was possibly beyond the reach of all human aid. Not only so, but he could do nothing for him without considerable trouble and expense and loss of time. He could not help without getting his priestly robes soiled. If the man should die on his hands he would be polluted. Moreover, he had been away from home for some considerable time, and his family would be expecting him for

dinner, and it would not do to disappoint them. Furthermore, the Levite was behind, and it was more fitting that a Levite should undertake a task of relief than a priest. Whatever excuses occurred to his mind, the fact is, he passed by on the other side. One glance at the man in distress and need was enough.

"And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side." It would seem that the conduct of the Levite was less excusable than that of the priest. He came to the place where the man was lying. He saw the wounded man as the priest did not. One who comes face to face with trouble or sorrow feels as no one else can. There is something in nearness that appeals to the human heart and calls out its sympathies. The Levite came closer than the priest; the appeal to his compassion was stronger on this account. If the Levite felt disposed to help, he strangled his kindly feelings and generous impulses, and passed by on the other side. He could have made the same excuses the priest made. He could urge the peril and trouble and expense and inconvenience involved in stopping to lend a helping hand. Besides, he may have thought that it would be manifestly improper for him to do what the priest neglected. If it had been a duty to assist this man in the circumstances, the priest would have done it. If he should stop and help, his act might be considered an affront to his superior and an implied condemnation of his course. To the Levite's mind there was only one thing to do, that was, to get away as fast as he could.

"And a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." The Samaritan was exposed to the same dangers as the priest and Levite. That made no difference. In the presence of distress he did not think of himself; he did not take counsel of his fears or comfort or

convenience. He did not recall the fact that the wounded man was not a Samaritan but a Jew, and that as a Samaritan he was bound to hate him and to have no dealings with him. To the Jew the Samaritan was of an alien and hostile race. In religion he was a heretic. He worshipped on Mount Gerizim, and not on Mount Zion. The Jew cursed him publicly in the temple and prayed that he might have no part in the resurrection, and refused to admit him as a proselyte. He would not accept his testimony in court. To eat a morsel of his bread was to eat the flesh of swine. To receive any favour from a Samaritan was to entail a curse upon his own children. It is natural to repay hate with hate, and insult with insult, and injury with injury. The Samaritan as a rule was not behind the Jew in cursing and in demonstrations of enmity and ill-will. He repaid the treatment he received in kind and with interest. It was an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life. This man could have left the wounded Jew in his blood without any scruples of conscience. His countrymen would have commended him for it.

There is nothing to show that it ever occurred to the Samaritan that the victim of the robbers was a Jew. "He was a man; that was enough; he was down, and must be raised; he was in need, and must be helped." For when he saw him he had compassion. His heart was stirred with a great pity. He went to him, and bound up his wounds, taking some of his own garments for the purpose. He poured in wine to cleanse and oil to heal. Having done this he set the man on his own beast, and walked himself. He brought his patient to an inn and took care of him. Having saved his life and having brought him to the attention of one of his own race, he might have thought he had done enough. But having done so much he felt constrained to do more. He not only took care of him during the night, but before leaving next morning he paid for his entertainment, and told the keeper of the inn to take care of him, and assured him that on his return he would pay him

for his services. The man had been robbed and had nothing to pay. The Samaritan provided for his present and future needs.

Our Lord asks the question, "Which one of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among robbers?" He reverses the lawyer's question. The lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbour? To whom is it my duty to show love? Point him out; tell me by what marks I shall know him to be such." He thought his neighbour was the man that lived near him, the man of the same blood and the same faith. Our Lord puts it this way, "Who is a neighbour? It is he who shows love, and not the one that does not show it." In His thought love is like the sun that shines on the evil and on the good, and like the rain that falls on the just and on the unjust. The Samaritan showed love to one whose need was his only claim. The wounded man had none of the marks of a neighbour in the lawyer's sense of the word. The lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbour?" Here is a man who asked, "To whom can I be a neighbour?" To the Saviour's question, "Which one of these showed himself a neighbour?" there was only one answer possible. The lawyer gave that answer, "I suppose he that showed mercy on him." Even now he will not speak the hated word "Samaritan." The application is, "Go, and do thou likewise." The learned expounder of the law is made to see what a mighty gulf there was between his teaching and his practice. He had been teaching the people that they were to love their neighbours as themselves. But to his thought only the members of the Hebrew race and commonwealth were their neighbours. For the first time in his life he learns the true meaning of the word. Any man, irrespective of race or creed with whom we live or chance to meet, is a neighbour. The world is a community; the race is a family. All mankind are neighbours and are bound by the law of Christ to show themselves such. "Help and need are neighbours."

The parable teaches a lesson of humanity. In Christ's time people seldom thought of man as man. They loved their neighbours, those who were of the same race and nation and moved in the same social circles and held the same faith, and hated all else. Max Muller said that to the Greek every man not speaking Greek was a barbarian; to the Jew every man not circumcised was a Gentile; to the Mohammedan every man not believing in the prophet of Arabia was an infidel. "It was Christianity that struck the word barbarian from the dictionaries of mankind and replaced it with the word brother." Under the influence of the teaching and spirit of Christ we are coming to see that all men everywhere are neighbours, and that it is open to us to do something to help the wounded pilgrim on life's highway. Robert Burns sang of the time when men to men the world o'er will brothers be; that a man's a man for a' that. Browning says,

> "For I, a man, with men am linked,
> And not a brute with brutes; no gain
> That I experience, must remain
> Unshared."

Longfellow spoke of his feelings at a banquet when so many were in the outer darkness and in the direst need. He spoke of the poverty-stricken millions who challenge our wine and bread; and impeach us all as traitors, the living and the dead.

> "And whenever I sit at the banquet
> Where the feast and the song are high,
> Amid the mirth and the music
> I can hear that awful cry.
>
> "And hollow and haggard eyes
> Look into the lighted hall;
> And wasted hands are extended
> To catch the crumbs that fall.

"For within there was light and plenty,
And odours filled the air;
And without there was cold and darkness
And hunger and despair."

The man in need anywhere on the planet, in China, in Japan, in India, in Africa, in the South Seas, is a man made in God's image, and is one to whom we can act a neighbourly part. If one should shut his compassion against suffering humanity in any part of the world, how can he claim that the love of God dwells in him?

Who is my neighbour? The man that lives next door? Yes. The man that lives within the same national boundaries? Yes. But not these alone. Every soul alive in need is a neighbour, and we can be neighbours to him if we will. It is right to love those who love us, and to salute those who salute us, and to do good to those who do good to us; but if we do no more than that, what reward can we expect? For sinners and publicans do that much. As Christian we are to love one another, even as Christ loved us. This is His new commandment. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." John says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." But our love is not to be confined to those who have been washed and sanctified and justified by the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. Jesus Christ tasted death for every man. He gave Himself a ransom for all. Those peoples that we speak of as strangers and foreigners and pagans are peoples for whom He died on the cross as much as for us. They are children of the same Father. They are not strange or foreign to Him. He is interested in them and concerned about their welfare no less than He is about us and our welfare. He is not willing that any one of them should perish. Because of their degradation and need He asks us to exert ourselves on their behalf, and to

do what is in our power to give them a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. If we are disposed to act the part of a neighbour we will do this.

Two-thirds of the race are in a worse condition than the wounded man on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. They are living and dying without hope and without God. The faiths in which they were born can afford them no relief. Their priests can do nothing for them. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, the life; and no one can come to the Father except by Him. It is for us to make Christ known. If we would walk in the footsteps of the Samaritan we will dismiss our prejudices; we will run risks; we will sacrifice our ease and comfort; we will give of our means, and do all in our power that these peoples may be evangelized. God has wondrously blessed and prospered the church. He has put it into the power of the church to carry the gospel to all mankind in a generation. Samuel J. Mills said, "We can do it if we will." It is for the church to say, "We can do it, and we will." What shall our course be? Shall we act like the priest and Levite and pass by on the other side? Or will we take pains and suffer inconvenience and do our duty? We cannot say, "Charity begins at home," and refuse to help Christ seek and save the lost without denying His name.

The parable applies to us as well as to the lawyer. If we condemn the priest and Levite, we must avoid their course. Otherwise we will condemn ourselves. If we admire the Samaritan, we must follow his example and show helpful love to every soul in need without regard to race or rank or religion. We must recognize no limits to our love except those of opportunity and ability. In the Samaritan we see the attentive look, the compassionate heart, the helpful hand, the willing feet, the open purse. As we think of the missionary significance of the parable we will recognize the need of giving attention to the Christless nations. We need to look into their condition. We need to know that there is nothing in their religions to re-

generate them. An honest investigation is the first essential. Then we need a compassionate heart. As we study these peoples and their needs, we will be inclined to sympathize with them. They are human beings like ourselves. They are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. They are men and women and children as we are. They have the same natures and the same capacities for joy and sorrow that we have. We need furthermore the helping hand. There is much to be done. Literature has to be created. Schools and churches and hospitals and homes have to be erected. We see the need of willing feet. We must walk that these may ride. We must do without comforts and conveniences that we may give the gospel to those who are living in ignorance and sin. The purse must be opened. God has committed much to us for this very purpose. What we have in our hands we hold in trust for those who are in need.

The missionary is the Samaritan of our day. He does everything the Samaritan did. He runs grave risks. He faces perils on sea and land. He submits to discomfort and trouble and expense. He walks that those to whom he ministers may ride to the inn where he will care for them. He gives his life and his money and his all for the redemption of mankind. It is not enough that the missionary does this; what is needed is that the whole church be enlisted. The church must look at the nations in need, and must have compassion, and take pains, and get down and walk, and give time and thought and money, that they may see to whom no tidings of Him came, and that those who have not heard may understand. When the whole church acts the part of the man she has named the Good Samaritan and whose name she has sent down the ages like a grand sweet song, the gospel of the kingdom will be speedily and fully preached in all the world for a testimony to all the nations.

Many devout souls have found comfort in the thought that Christ Himself is the Good Samaritan. Though He was in the

form of God, He emptied Himself, and took the form of a servant. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. He stooped to lift us up from our fallen and lost condition. He was rich, and yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich. He applied to Himself the words spoken by the prophet, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." He proposes to supply every need of ours according to His own riches in glory. In His healing and helpful ministry He left us an example, that we should walk in His steps.

VIII

THE GREAT COMMISSION ACCORDING TO LUKE

And He said unto them, These are My words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and He said unto them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.—Luke 24: 44–49.

IN the death and resurrection of Christ the words that He had spoken to His disciples, while He was yet with them, were realized. At Cæsarea Philippi Peter confessed for himself and his associates that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. That was the great truth our Lord sought to reveal to them in the first part of His ministry. As soon as they grasped it He began to teach them another. That incident at Cæsarea Philippi marked an epoch in the training of the Twelve. "From that time," we are told, "began Jesus to show unto His disciples, that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and the third day be raised up." Peter objected to the thought of a suffering Messiah. His protest voiced the feelings of the nation. They wanted a triumphant Messiah, one who would ride prosperously and gloriously and rejoicingly. It was

this protest that called forth the stern rebuke, "Get thee behind Me, Satan, thou art a stumbling-block unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." We are told later that while they abode in Galilee Jesus said to them, "The Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men; and they shall kill Him; and the third day He shall be raised up." Later still as they were in the way to Jerusalem He took the twelve disciples apart, and said to them, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify; and the third day He shall be raised up." On the Mount of Transfiguration, when Moses and Elijah appeared to Him, the topic of conversation was the decease that He should accomplish at Jerusalem. It would seem that from the time of Peter's confession of Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, these events formed the substance of most of his teaching. He was endeavouring to prepare them for what was in store for himself and for them, so that being forewarned they might be forearmed.

Not only so, but in the death and resurrection of Christ all things which were written concerning Him in the law of Moses, and in the prophets and the psalms, were fulfilled. From the time when the first promise of a Redeemer was given in Eden till the angel announced the wondrous birth in Bethlehem there were those who looked forward to the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Christ the incarnate Son of God, crucified, risen and glorified, is the essence of all Scripture. He is set forth as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Every animal offered in sacrifice was a mute prophecy of the one offering by which He should perfect forever them that are sanctified. Every goat on whose head the sins of the people were laid before being led out into the wilderness was a type of Him upon whom our sins were laid and who suffered without the camp. The entire sacrificial system of the temple derived

its significance from the Christ who should come and by the sacrifice of Himself become the author of eternal redemption to as many as should believe on His name. The Old Testament has little meaning and little value except as it tells of Him who was to satisfy the hopes and desires and aspirations of all nations.

The disciples were sad when they thought of the death of their Lord and of His burial. One of the two on the way to Emmaus spoke of Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. "But we hoped that it was He that should redeem Israel. Yea and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. Moreover, certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; and when they found not His body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive." The crucifixion crushed their hearts; the story of the resurrection was too good to be true. Our Lord told them that what had taken place was in fulfillment of what had been foretold in their own Scriptures and what He had said to them. He said to these two, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Behoved it not that the Christ should suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?" And beginning from Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. To a larger company the same evening, referring to what had taken place, He said, "These are My words which I have spoken unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms concerning Me." The disciples were expecting to see Him slay the wicked with the rod of His mouth, and restore the kingdom to Israel. They were astonished beyond measure and distressed when they saw Him put to death. All their most

fondly-cherished hopes were cut off like a spider's web. He sought to comfort them by showing that in the events they were lamenting God's gracious purpose was being fulfilled.

Then opened He their mind that they might apprehend the true intent and meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures. John says He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." Both writers refer to the same event. Luke spoke of the effect of their illumination; John spoke of its efficient cause. Having opened their minds that they might understand the Scriptures He said, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations." This is the gist of the Old Testament as interpreted by our Lord.

In His summary of the law and the prophecies and the psalms there are three things: The death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and missions. His sufferings and death were foretold. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due. And they made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich man in his death. He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. But His soul was not left in Sheol; His flesh did not see corruption. The gospel is grounded on these two historical facts: the death and the resurrection of Jesus the Christ. These facts formed the substance of all apostolic preaching. On Pentecost Peter stated that Christ was crucified and slain by lawless men. He adds that God raised Him up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. Referring to the patriarch David, He said, "Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins He would set one upon the throne; He foreseeing this

spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we are witnesses." In his next sermon Peter said to his hearers, "But ye despised the Holy and Righteous One, and asked that a murderer be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." A little later he said, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree." In the house of Cornelius Peter said, "And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew, hanging Him on a tree. Him God raised up from the dead, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses that were before chosen of God, even to us, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead." In his address at Antioch of Pisidia Paul said, "And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet asked they of Pilate that He should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead." To the Athenians Paul preached Jesus and the resurrection. Writing to the Corinthians he said that the gospel he preached to them was this, "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." It was this Jesus of Nazareth who had been put to death for our offenses and who had been raised up for our justification that God exalted with His own right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. By His death He became the author of eternal redemption to as many as should obey Him; by His resurrection He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness.

Not only was it written that Christ should die and rise from the dead, but that repentance and remission of sins should be

preached in His name unto all the nations. The prophets foretold that all flesh should see the salvation of God. The earth should be filled with His glory as the waters cover the sea. "And the nations shall see Thy righteousness, and all kings Thy glory." Old Testament prophecy finds its fulfillment in the evangelization of the world. The apostles said, "To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name all that believe on Him shall receive remission of sins."

To His disciples our Lord said, "Ye are witnesses of these things." They were specially qualified for, and specially charged with, this duty. They did not go out of their own accord or on their own authority. As the Father had sent the Son, so the Son sent them as witnesses. He called and trained them for this service. They went as His authorized agents. They claimed to be eye-witnesses of the great facts which they proclaimed. So Peter said, "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit whom God hath given to them that obey Him." They were to preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ. They felt that they were Christ's ambassadors.

The apostles were to begin from Jerusalem. In that city in which those matters of fact upon which the gospel was founded were transacted, and where they could be contradicted and disproved if they were not true, they were to be first attested. On the very place where Christ was condemned and put to death as a criminal He was proclaimed as Lord and Messiah. In the capital of the theocracy, in the city of the great king, He was preached as the only hope of sinful men. There it was solemnly announced that there was salvation in His name; and that there was salvation in none other; for there was none other name given under heaven and among men wherein we must be saved. It had been said long ago that the law should go forth from Mount Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The holy city was the divinely-appointed birth-

place of the church which Christ purchased with His own blood. The apostles obeyed this command. They began in Jerusalem. They spent some considerable time in that city. Under their preaching and oversight a strong and flourishing church was built in Jerusalem. The believers were numbered by the tens of thousands. But the apostles did not confine their labours to Jerusalem. Having made a good beginning there they felt that they must extend the circle of their activity as widely as possible, and found the kingdom of God by their teaching and preaching. They began in Jerusalem and continued there for a season. Then leaving the church under the supervision of James, the Lord's brother, they went out in all directions and preached a crucified and risen and glorified Redeemer.

So important was the work of bearing witness to Christ that they were not to enter upon it in their own wisdom and strength. Our Lord said to them, "And behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city till ye be clothed with power from on high." This promise is the promise *par excellence*. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the gift in which all other gifts terminate. So necessary was it to them in their work that Jesus had said to them, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go I will send Him to you." The Spirit would bring all things to their remembrance that He had taught them, and would show them things to come. He would guide them and energize them in the performance of the tasks to which they were called. The Spirit was poured out on them on Pentecost. That very day they began to testify, and that very day the church was born. Ever since the church has grown and spread like a banyan tree. The branches have taken root and have spread forth constantly. The one hundred and twenty of the upper room have multiplied into countless millions, and now the foremost nations of the world delight to call themselves Christian.

It is plain that the missionary enterprise is in accordance with the will and plan of God. It is broadly and firmly based on the law of Moses and on the prophets and the Psalms. It would have availed little for Christ to die and to be raised up, if these facts were not published far and near. Christ tasted death for every man; every man must know that fact or he cannot profit by it. He gave Himself for all; the testimony is to be borne in its own time. The drama of redemption cannot be complete without missions. Christ cannot see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied until the whole world is evangelized. Professor Strong has well said, "The commission is the necessary logical outcome and application of all that had gone before since Christ called the twelve to follow Him. It contains the practical meaning of all the preaching and instruction, and not of that alone; of all the planning and praying also, of all the faithfulness and sorrow and sacrifice. Galilee and Samaria and Perea and Judea are incomplete without this. Olivet and Gethsemane and Calvary and the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea are incomplete without this. Whatever Christ has said or done or suffered from the beginning, if it have any outlet into the future at all, must find that outlet through this charge which sends the disciples out fitted to be channels of living water to the world."

The promise is, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." But the questions arise, "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and, How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and, How shall they hear without a preacher?" Missions are indispensable if Christ is to be glorified. Missions are as necessary to the salvation of the world as the death and the resurrection of Christ.

Eugene Stock asks, "Did a divine person come into the world to bless mankind? Either he did or he did not. If he did all mankind ought to know it. They cannot know it unless Christian people tell them. Here is a tremendous fact, if

it is a fact—a fact that must necessarily concern every man ; and we think it a plain and simple duty to tell men of it. All men have an indisputable claim to hear it. Upon whom have they this claim ? Upon those who know it themselves. Those who know Christ are to tell it to those who know Him not. That is missions." It must be right to make Christ known. He cannot be trusted and loved and served by those who have no knowledge of His character and teaching and work.

Warneck, the great German writer on missions, shows that the whole church of the present is the result of the missionary work of the past. That which gave the church its origin abides as the condition of its life. Missions are a natural outflow of the life of faith in the church, a necessity of its own preservation, and therefore a self-evident duty. The church is untrue to herself, it is false to its origin, and false to the essential character of Christianity, if it should withdraw from its missionary obligation. He refers to what Paul said about the wild olive branches being grafted into the good olive tree. Had it not been for the missionary work done among the Gentiles the church would have perished long ago. For some reason Christianity never took vigorous root among the Jewish or Semitic people. It was Paul's missionary propaganda in the regions beyond that saved the church and made it a world power. In the Middle Ages the missionaries won the northern nations to the faith and again saved the church. The Mohammedan armies would have exterminated Christianity if it had not been for the conversion of the northern peoples. It was Charles Martel in the West and John Sobieski in the East who shattered the Mohammedan power and saved Christianity. The work done for the church by the missionary cause in our day is so great that only coming generations will be able to fully appreciate it. We are too close to it to see its magnitude and moral grandeur.

Mrs. Browning says that every age, through being beheld too close, is ill-discerned by those who have not lived past it.

"We'll suppose
Mount Athos carved, as Alexander schemed,
To some colossal statue of a man;
The peasants, gathering brushwood in his ear,
Had guessed as little as the browsing goats
Of form or feature of humanity
Up there—in fact, had travelled five miles off
Or ere the giant image broke on them —
Full human profile, nose and chin distinct,
Mouth, muttering rhythms of silence up the sky,
And fed at evening with the blood of suns;
Grand torso—hand that flung perpetually
The largess of a silver river down
To all the country pastures. 'Tis ever thus
With times we live in—evermore too great
To be apprehended near."

The missionary enterprise has done for the church far more than the most enlightened know or even imagine. It has contributed to her vitality and energy and enterprise and devotion. It has filled her with the instinct of victory. As she has thought of her sons and daughters, her heroes and heroines, on the far-flung battle-line; as she has read of or listened to their experiences, her own heart has been strangely warmed and strangely stirred; she has tightened her grip on the great truths of the gospel; she has attempted to live a more Christlike life; she has summoned all her powers to do exploits in the name of her Lord. The missionary enterprise has created a new atmosphere in the church, an atmosphere in which a higher and finer type of manhood and womanhood has been developed. It has saved the church from worldliness, from provincialism, from sectarianism, from selfishness, and from many other evils. It has brought the membership into closer fellowship with Jesus Christ, and into more cordial coöperation with Him in all His efforts to save the whole world.

Back of the missionary cause is the Old Testament and the New Testament; back of the Old Testament and the New

Testament is the eternal purpose of God; and back of the eternal purpose of God is the infinite love of God for every soul that bears His image. Because this cause is rooted in the love of God, it must succeed. Heaven and earth may pass away; but His sure word of promise cannot fail.

IX

THE DIVINE ORDER IN MISSIONS

Acts 1 : 8; Luke 24: 47; Rom. 1 : 16

STANDING with the Eleven on Mount Olivet, our Lord said to them, "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This language shows conclusively that He did not mean that the apostles were to address themselves to these places in the order named, finishing one before doing anything in the next. What He had in mind was that they were to bear testimony in them simultaneously. There is nothing here to indicate that any one of these places had any preference over the others. Our Lord was thinking of the whole world, and He wished them to undertake world-wide witness-bearing. Unquestionably this was His program.

This Scripture is frequently misquoted and misapplied. Speakers and writers quote it thus, "You shall be My witnesses, first in Jerusalem, then in Judea, then in Samaria, and then unto the uttermost part of the earth." By substituting "first" for "both," and by inserting "then" three times where it does not belong, they materially alter the meaning of the sentence. They speak of their city or town as Jerusalem, of their state as Judea, of their nation as Samaria, and the rest of the world, as the uttermost part of the earth. The place in which they live is first in their estimation in every sense, the state comes next, the nation next, and the outside world is last of all and least of all. They insist that this should be the order in all missionary undertakings. One has only to read

the passage as it is found in all the versions to discover that it gives no support whatever to this view. The text has been changed to justify the theory. It may be said that any theory that requires a change in the inspired text should be rejected.

If the apostles had confined their labours to Jerusalem till all the people in that city were reached and won to the faith, they would not have been able to preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God elsewhere. They had not so interpreted the parting charge of their Lord. Having made a beginning in one place, they hurried on to the next. They sought to reach every part of the habitable globe with the message of salvation through Jesus the Crucified. They planned and laboured for the widest possible diffusion of the gospel and in the shortest time possible. Because of their policy and unwearied activity, we are not surprised to hear in a little time of the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria. The Epistle of James, the first Christian document that has come down to us, shows that the gospel was heralded among the twelve tribes of the dispersion when it was written. In the Epistle to the Colossians we read of the gospel being preached in all creation under heaven, and of it bearing fruit in all the world and increasing. In accordance with the instructions of their Lord, the apostles undertook to reach every section of the field. What they aimed at they practically accomplished. In a single generation the gospel was preached in all the places named in their commission, and to all classes and conditions of society.

The successors of the apostles had the same conception of their duty. Eusebius tells us that they continued the work of preaching the gospel, and scattering abundantly over the whole earth the wholesome seed of the heavenly kingdom. A very large number of the disciples divided their goods among the poor, left their country, filled the office of evangelists, coveting eagerly to preach Christ, to carry the glad tidings of God to those who had not yet heard the word of faith. "And after laying the foundations of the faith in some remote and

barbarous countries, establishing pastors among them, and confiding to them the care of these young settlements, without stopping longer, they hastened on to other nations, attended by the grace and virtue of God." By the close of the first century the gospel was preached from Spain to Babylon and from Scythia to Central Africa. At the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr said, "There is no people, Greek or barbarian, or of any other race, by whatsoever name or manners they may be distinguished, however ignorant of arts or agriculture, whether they dwell in tents or wander about in covered wagons, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered, in the name of the crucified Jesus to the Father and Creator of all things."

In the great commission as recorded by Luke we learn that our Lord told His apostles to "begin from Jerusalem." But that was not, as is erroneously believed and taught, because Jerusalem was their home. We know that Jerusalem was not the home of any one of them. On the day of Pentecost the people who heard Peter and the Eleven, said, "Are not all these that speak Galileans?" Jerusalem was not their home, nor was Judea. In the different records of the great commission, nothing is said about preaching in Galilee. They were to begin from Jerusalem for other and most cogent reasons. Referring to this command, Broadus says, "And doesn't that mean that I ought to begin at Louisville, and that you ought to begin at Boston, and others ought to begin at Brooklyn and New York, and some other people ought to begin at Smoketown, and that everybody should begin at home and work out in widening circles? I trow not, because not one of these men lived in Jerusalem." Broadus says that they were to begin at Jerusalem because at Jerusalem the great events of the Christian religion had taken place; and if they had not made some converts in Jerusalem they could not have gone to foreign parts and expected the people there to believe these events. In Jerusalem Christ died for the sins of the world; He was buried;

He rose the third day according to the Scriptures. If these things were proclaimed and believed by large numbers of people who had the means of investigating the facts, the apostles could go elsewhere with some assurance that their preaching would not be as idle tales to those who heard. It was most fitting that, in the very city where Christ was rejected by His own people, He should be preached as the Prince of Life, as the Son of the Most High God, and that He should be accepted as such.

The correct rendering is "Beginning *from* Jerusalem." If the Greek had been so rendered from the first, there would not have been so many attempts to minimize the missionary appeal. Referring to the preposition translated "from," Winer says it is "used to denote simply the point from which motion proceeds." This agrees with the Scripture; "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Eugene Stock states that even if our Lord had said "at Jerusalem," the command was natural and reasonable. "Here in this city first: certainly; how could it be otherwise?" And this was what was actually and rightly done. But after nineteen centuries to neglect to evangelize all nations because of the needs of some place near us, and to do this on the strength of our Lord's simple and natural words about the commencement of an age-long and world-wide campaign, is to adopt a very strange course. The correct translation is all that is necessary to settle the question as to our Lord's meaning, thus, as a matter of fact, "at" never meant, nor could mean, anything else. The emphasis is on "beginning." The church had and could have, but one birthplace. The Revolutionary war began at Bunker Hill, but it was not confined to that spot. Bunker Hill was the initial point only. Afterwards came Valley Forge, and Trenton, and Yorktown, but the war did not "begin" at any of these places. Paul said that "from Jerusalem and round about, even unto Illyricum," he had fully preached the gospel of Christ. With him and with the others,

Jerusalem was the point of departure. Their field was the whole inhabited world. They did their best to cover that field. No apostle made Jerusalem his permanent home.

Moreover, at that particular time there was a providential opportunity for spreading the gospel far and near. There were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven, "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians." Here were representatives from fifteen countries and from the three then known continents. They were gathered in the capital of the theocracy in order that they might first hear the gospel and then diffuse a knowledge of it abroad. These people were in touch with the lands in which they were born. Any event of capital importance relating to their religion would be promptly reported to their kinsfolk and acquaintances. Here was a great and effectual door of utterance opened by the finger of God. Here was missionary machinery of the greatest value ready to their hand. If the apostles had begun preaching in their home in Galilee, they would have missed this opportunity for the wide propagation of the gospel which the presence of so many foreign Jews and proselytes in Jerusalem at the feast afforded.

That this is the correct interpretation of the words, "Beginning from Jerusalem," is clear from the fact that about fourteen years after the Ascension Antioch became the second capital of Christianity. It was in Antioch that the Holy Spirit said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Antioch was not the home of either of these men. Barnabas was born in Cyprus; Saul was born in Tarsus. Neither one of these began his work in his own home. Saul wanted to live and work in Jerusalem. The Lord said to him, "Depart, for I will send thee forth far hence to the Gentiles." It was from Antioch that these men started

out on their first missionary tour; it was to Antioch they returned and rehearsed all things that the Lord had done with them. It was from Antioch that Paul and Silas started out on their second missionary tour, and to Antioch they returned and reported their success. It was from Antioch that Paul started out on his third tour; from that tour he never returned. Antioch was a far better base of operations. Jerusalem sank to a position of secondary importance. Little is said about it after the first few years of the Christian era.

Speaking of the gospel, Paul says it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The Jew was to hear first because to the Jew pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; because of the Jewish race is Christ concerning the flesh, and not on account of any local or geographical considerations. In the second gospel sermon, Peter said to his hearers, "Unto you first God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you, in turning you away every one of you from his iniquities." He tells them in the same connection why they were to hear first. "Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, 'And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'" They had a prior claim to the Messianic salvation because they were Abraham's seed, and therefore heirs according to the promise. All God's gracious dealings with them were designed to be a preparation for the new revelation of Himself and of His will in Christ Jesus. They were to hear first because they were Jews.

For two thousand years God had been preparing these people for the coming of the Redeemer. He taught them by judges, by kings, by priests, by prophets, by righteous men; He taught them by bondage, by disaster, by defeat, by captivity; He taught them by His goodness and severity. They had this great advantage over all other peoples, that to them

were committed the oracles of God. So it is said, "He showed His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for His ordinances they have not known them." In His talk with the woman at Jacob's well, our Lord said, "Salvation is from the Jews." It was through Abraham's seed that all the families of the earth were to be blessed. Israel was to become an apostle of the Gentiles. So God said, "I have set thee for a light to the nations, that thou shouldst be for salvation to the ends of the earth." It was for Jewish believers to convert the world. To them the great words were addressed, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And the nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy dawn." The prayer of the devout Israelite was, "God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon the earth, Thy saving health among all nations." It was foretold that the law should go forth from Mount Zion, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. If they would evangelize the nations, they must be first evangelized.

Not only were the Jews prepared for the gospel as no other people were, but they were scattered among all nations. This contact was necessary if they were to be the chosen messengers of God to give a knowledge of His grace to all nations. Strabo says it would not be easy to find a place where the Jews had not gone. The Jew who had been of all men most provincial became a cosmopolitan. Every town had its synagogue in which the law of Moses was read on every Sabbath. The Jew scoured sea and land to make proselytes. Josephus tells us that many converts were made to Judaism. Harnack says that the Judaism of the dispersion, in distinction from the Palestinian, was in many ways both the prelude to Christianity, and the bridge leading over to it. The Jew was living in expectancy of the promised Messiah. He carried his great promise and his great hope with him wherever he went, and

filled all nations with a sense of expectancy. Giving the gospel to the Jew first was the very best way of reaching all nations.

The Jew was to hear the gospel first; that was so ordained; but it would be false to say that it was intended for the Jew in preference to the Greek. The gospel was not principally for the Jews; it was for all men everywhere. "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not of the Gentiles also? Yes, of the Gentiles also; if so be that God is one." Monotheism necessarily implied a universal salvation. If the gospel is God's power to save the Jew first, it is His power to save the Greek also. Paul never lost sight of the fact that salvation is promised to every believer. Christ is a light to lighten the Gentiles; as He is the glory of the people Israel. It was to the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia that Paul said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be first spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." The Jews were an elect race, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, His first-born. It was only when they despised their birthright that Paul turned to the Gentiles.

It was according to the counsel of the eternal God that the Jews were to hear the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation, first. Our Lord recognized this. He said, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." To the Syrophenician woman He said, "Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." When He sent out the Twelve on their first tour, He charged them not to go into any way of the Gentiles, and not to enter into any city of the Samaritans; they were to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Later on He commanded them to bear witness to Him first in Jerusalem. They did that. For some years they preached to none save to Jews only. We find Paul beginning his work in the synagogue. He did that in Damascus, in Salamis, in Antioch of Pisidia, in Iconium, in Thessalonica, in Berea, in Athens, in Corinth and

in Ephesus. On his arrival in Rome he called the chief men of his own race together for a conference. The Jews had a priority of claim and were first addressed. It mattered not where they lived, they were the ones to whom the good tidings of the Kingdom of God were first proclaimed.

The use often made of the passages relating to the priority of the Jew in point of gospel privilege finds no warrant in Holy Writ. It is perfectly proper to carry on work in one's own neighbourhood, but it is not necessary to pervert Scripture to do that. Every little town in Christendom is not Jerusalem; and the Anglo-Saxon is not a Jew. These passages applied only to the Jew, and to the Jew for very special reasons. No part of the wide world field has any primacy or priority now, unless it be that part whose need is greatest. Christ has come and has accomplished His work. The gospel of His grace is for all mankind. Partition walls of every sort have been done away. All men are God's children. They are made in His image, and He is equally interested in the salvation of all.

The Divine order in missions is that the church should do all in her power to give the gospel to every kindred and nation and tongue and tribe and people on the globe. She is not to confine her efforts to any one section. The great commission contemplates the evangelization of "all nations," "all the world," "the whole creation," "the uttermost part of the earth." Only as the parting charge of our Lord is realized can He see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

X

MISSIONS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY

And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. —Mark 16 : 20.

They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word.—Acts 8 : 4.

THE missionary cause is a distinguishing characteristic of the Christian religion. It has been said that no other religion has made it the indispensable duty of its votaries to disseminate its principles throughout the world in order to ameliorate the moral condition of the human family, from a principle of pure goodwill to man. Referring to the time when the Church was established, Ramsay says that no existing religion was wider than national; and no ancient religion wished to proselytize or take in new members. The object of each was to confine its benefits to a small circle of devotees, and to enlist the aid of the god whom it worshipped against all strangers, all foreigners, all enemies, that is, against all who were not within the privileged circle. Our Lord projected a policy which was the exact opposite of this. He contemplated reaching every living soul. So it came to pass that the church which He founded was, during the first period of its existence, distinctively a missionary organization. Its chief and almost its sole purpose was that of spreading the gospel far and near. Its endeavour was to carry into effect the parting command of its Founder, to make disciples of all the

nations. In speaking of missions in the early years of Christianity I ask your attention —

I. *To the field.* Our Lord was very explicit in His instructions as to the territory to be occupied. In one of His parables He said, "The field is the world." He said again, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." "For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but to save the world." "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all the nations." "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Jesus of Nazareth is never represented as the Saviour of one race or of one nation, but always as the Saviour of the world. He tasted death for every man; He gave Himself a ransom for all. He said to His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world." He charged them to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. Nothing less than the evangelization and Christianization of the whole world will accomplish His purpose and satisfy His heart.

The world as known by the disciples was the Roman Empire. The world of that time was a Mediterranean world, and extended three thousand miles east and west, and fifteen hundred miles north and south. The area of the Empire measured about two million square miles. In that area there were between four and five thousand cities. Many of those cities were accessible by boats. The population of the Empire was about one hundred millions. These figures show that the world as then known was somewhat larger than India, and had a population about one-third as large as that of India. The immediate task of the church was the conquest of this people and their institutions. To the wise man of that day the most audacious and the most hopeless work ever undertaken by man was that of bringing the Roman Empire into captivity to the

obedience of Christ. The learning, the wisdom, the wealth, and the power of the world were arrayed against the church and absolutely confident of the victory.

II. *The agents.* The commission was given to eleven men. On a mountain in Galilee our Lord said to them, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." While the commission was originally given to the eleven it was given to them as representatives of all believers. We know what the apostles did. We know how far they went and the countries they evangelized. Speaking for himself Paul said that from Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum he had fully preached the gospel of Christ. These places did not mark the limits of the field of his activity. He began in Damascus; he preached as far west as Rome and perhaps as far as Spain. Peter preached in Babylon, and wrote to the elect who were sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Tradition tells us that Thomas went to India, Bartholomew to Parthia, Andrew to Russia, Thaddeus to Edessa, Philip to Scythia, Matthew to Ethiopia, Judas the Zealot to Arabia. No one knows how much truth there is in these traditions. But it is certain that the apostles were busy somewhere. The magnificent results achieved indicate this.

Harnack says that the most numerous and successful missionaries were not the regular teachers, but Christians themselves by dint of their loyalty and courage. Above all, every confessor and martyr was a missionary; he not merely confirmed the faith of those already won, but also enlisted new members by his testimony and his death. It was no empty phrase when Tertullian and others like him asserted that the blood of the Christians was a seed. Nevertheless it was not merely the confessors and martyrs who were missionaries; it was

characteristic of this religion that every one who seriously confessed the faith proved of service to its propaganda. We cannot hesitate to believe that the great mission of the church was in reality accomplished by informal missionaries. The testimony of Celsus, a bitter enemy, is to the same effect. "Many of the Christians without any special calling, watch for opportunities, and both within and without the temples, boldly proclaim their faith; they find their way into the cities and the armies, and there having called the people together, harangue them with fanatical gestures." Gibbon says it became the most sacred duty of a new convert to diffuse among his friends and relations the inestimable blessings which he had received, and to warn them against a refusal that would be severely punished as a criminal disobedience to the will of a benevolent but all-powerful Deity.

We are told that the supreme characteristic of the apostolic church in this respect was the missionary zeal and activity of the individual members. Not only apostles and evangelists and teachers, but merchants, and miners, and sailors, and soldiers, and craftsmen, voluntarily made it one of their chief objects, whether at home or abroad, in private or public life, to extend to others the gospel message. There were garrisons along the borders of the Empire. These became outposts of Christian civilization. "These military barracks soon became centres from which Christianity spread outside the civilized world, and these isolated spots along the Rhine, the Danube, the Euxine and the Euphrates became oases of the faith. When the armies pushed beyond the boundaries of the Empire Christianity was sure to go with them. Christian soldiers captured and enslaved by barbarians were the means of converting whole nations." Women as well as men were active agents. It was Prisca and her husband that expounded the way of the Lord more accurately to the eloquent Apollos. They were Paul's fellow workers in Christ Jesus; they laid down their necks for the apostle's sake. All the churches of the Gentiles united with

Paul in giving them thanks. Tryphæna and Tryphosa laboured in the Lord. Mary and the beloved Persis laboured much. Phœbe was a servant of the church at Cenchræa; she had been a helper of many and of the apostle himself. Euodia and Syntyche laboured in the gospel with Paul, and he says their names are in the book of life.

Then as in no period since every individual Christian was a missionary, and it was to this individualistic evangelism that the marvellous extension of that time was due. History shows that Christianity was carried into Lyons, the rich city of the Gauls, and into the opulent provinces of Asia by commercial men. It was carried into Germany by some prisoners of war. At the close of a fierce persecution, which scattered the believers in Alexandria, churches were founded by the fugitives in the neighbouring countries. The whole church was essentially a missionary society. The life of the church was one long conflict; it must fight in self-defense, and conquer or die. Pressense says, "A Christian had but to cross his own threshold, and walk the public streets of his own city, to find a pagan people at his own door to be converted." A new convert became the missionary to his own family; the most humble were often the most powerful. Wherever a Christian set foot, however barren the soil, there he planted the cross and gathered around him the nucleus of a church.

III. *The methods.* The first I mention was that of preaching. The Master said to the eleven, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations." On the day of Pentecost the believers in Jerusalem were all together in one place. A sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind filled the house, and tongues parting asunder as of fire sat upon each one. These tongues were symbols of their office. They indicated, as Longfellow said, that they were to preach in every form of human speech, from continent to continent. The

record says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Peter was the principal speaker on that occasion. Before the day closed three thousand were added to the original number of believers. Later on we are told that every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ. When the number of disciples was multiplying, the apostles felt that it was not fit that they should forsake the word of God and serve tables. At their suggestion seven men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, were appointed over the business of distributing food to those who had need, and the apostles gave themselves steadfastly to prayer and to the ministry of the word. When persecution came and the church was scattered those that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. Peter told Cornelius that Christ charged the apostles to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is He who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. Paul said that it pleased God to reveal His Son in him, that he might preach Him among the Gentiles. He says elsewhere that he was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. As soon as he was convinced of the messiahship of Jesus he began to preach. In Damascus he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God. In Jerusalem he preached boldly in the name of the Lord. Paul wrote to the Colossians that he proclaimed Christ, admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he might present every man perfect in Christ; "whereunto I labour also, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily." To the Ephesians he wrote, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." The early church was a witnessing church; it was a preaching church. The truth concerning Christ was proclaimed and

pressed home to the heart and conscience. Mark's statement that they went out and preached everywhere is a summary of the record of what was done.

The second method I mention is that of working miracles. When our Lord gave them His parting charge He said to them, "These signs shall accompany them that believe: in My name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up deadly serpents, and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." To the lame beggar at the beautiful gate of the temple Peter said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Immediately his feet and ankle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. The Samaritans gave heed to the things that were spoken by Philip when they heard and saw the signs which he did. "For from many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed." Peter found a paralytic in Lydda; he had been in bed for eight years. Peter said to him, "Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee; arise, and make thy bed." And straightway he arose. In Joppa Peter prayed beside the body of Dorcas and said, "Tabitha, arise," and she opened her eyes and sat up. In Jerusalem they even carried the sick out into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might overshadow some one of them. "And there came also together the multitude from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one." At Lystra there was a cripple who had never walked. Paul said to him, "Stand upright on thy feet." And he leaped up and walked. The people who saw this were amazed and thought

the gods had come down in the likeness of men. In Ephesus special miracles were wrought by the hands of Paul: insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out. On the island of Malta Paul laid his hand on the father of Publius and healed him. And when this was done the rest also who had diseases came and were cured. These miracles of healing directed the attention of the people to Christ the source of life and health. They disposed many to give a favourable hearing to the truth and to accept it. As a result of the healing of Æneas it is said that all that dwelt at Lydda and Sharon turned to the Lord. When it became known throughout Joppa that Dorcas was restored to life, many believed on the Lord.

Thirdly, the apostles associated other men with them in the service and directed them and their labours. Some of these were young men of unusual promise. We know the names of some of these: Timothy, Titus, Silas, Epaphroditus, Luke, Epaphras, Sosthenes, Tychicus, Secundus, Aristarchus, Sopater, Trophimus, Urbanus, Quadratus, Zenas the lawyer, Andronicus, Junias, Rufus, Ampliatus, Herodion, Lucius, Jason, and Epænetus. Of Timothy it is said that as a child serveth a father, so he served with Paul in the furtherance of the gospel. Timothy was left at one time in Ephesus that he might charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith. Titus was left in Crete, that he might set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city. Tychicus was sent to Ephesus that he might make all things known to the Christians there, and that he might comfort their hearts. Paul spoke of Epaphroditus as "my brother and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need." Aristarchus and Mark and Justus "are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, men that have been a comfort unto me."

Other men whose names are mentioned had special tasks assigned them. They assisted the work in many ways. In the work they did they were being prepared to lead when the apostles should go to their reward.

Fourthly, the believers were organized and instructed and put to work. The apostles did not give their testimony and then pass on, leaving the converts to do as they pleased. They gathered them into churches. Elders were appointed to protect and to feed the flock. They were to exercise oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God, nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as lording it over the charge allotted to them, but making themselves ensamples to the flock. The men selected for this high office must be apt to teach; they must hold to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that they might be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers. The believers were to continue steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, and the breaking of bread and the prayers. The ordinances created and kept alive the sense of unity. For in one Spirit were they all baptized into one body. The common worship with the Lord's Supper as its centre maintained the feeling of brotherhood. "No other cultus could point to such a ceremony, with its sublimity and unction, its brotherly feeling and many-sidedness. Here every experience, every spiritual need, found refreshment. It was a thanksgiving, a sacrifice, a representation here and now of the death of Christ, a love-feast of the brotherhood, a support of the hungry and distressed." The believers were encouraged and enabled to live lives of holiness. By doing so they put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. They caused many to glorify God in the day of visitation. Under such teaching and oversight the church became more and more a disciplined and efficient force. So it came to pass as has been said that every new church founded became in its turn a new base for further operations, and so it was that the

gospel spread with a rapidity and an enthusiasm that carried all before it.

Fifthly, they visited and confirmed the believers. On their return from the first missionary tour, Paul and Barnabas visited Lystra and Iconium and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. After the council in Jerusalem, Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren in Antioch with many words and confirmed them. We read that Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare." Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them. Because of this he and Paul parted company. Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches. Paul and Silas visited Derbe and Lystra and the other places in the region of Phrygia and Galatia where churches had been founded on the first tour. As they went they delivered to the churches the decrees which had been ordained by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. "So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily." After his return from the second tour, Paul spent some time in Antioch, and then departed and went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples. On this third tour he spent two years in Ephesus. After that he passed through Macedonia and Achaia, and gave much exhortation to the disciples. By these visits the believers were constituted a compact and powerful body. As the church was edified it was multiplied.

Sixthly, literature was provided. The things most surely believed were reduced to writing. The gospels were written that believers might know the certainty concerning the things

wherein they had been instructed. Speaking of the things not written in his Gospel John said, "But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name." The Epistles were written to protect the churches against heresies, to stir the members up to do their duty; and to make the whole counsel of God known. In these documents the fundamental principles of the kingdom of God and all that relates to life and godliness are set forth. Far more than the Old Testament Scriptures the New Testament is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. The written word is able to make one wise unto salvation, and is therefore an evangelistic agency of the greatest value.

IV. *The motive.* The command of the risen Lord was clear and plain. He said to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." "Ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." That command was unlike any other ever given, in that it had all authority in heaven and on earth behind it. Their Lord's command impelled them to devote their lives to this task. Another motive was the need of the world. Darkness covered the lands, and gross darkness the peoples. Gibbon says that to the philosophers all religions were equally false; to the people they were all equally true; and to the statesman they were all equally useful. The Emperor was at once a priest, an atheist, and a god. The nations needed pardon and peace and hope; they needed strength for their daily tasks and burdens; they needed the consolation that brightens the great mystery of the grave. The need was a motive. Compassion led those who were enlightened and redeemed to give the blessings of redemption to all mankind. The love of Christ constrained them. To many they appeared to be beside themselves; the

onlookers did not know the secret of their quenchless enthusiasm. They did not know that the love of Christ was the mainspring of their lives. Christ in them was the hope of glory; Christ in them was the force that sent them out in all directions to make His saving grace and power known. Lawrence says, "The main source of missions is not, strictly speaking, in any motive at all, but in a motor, in Christ Himself as author, operator, and energizer of all divine vitalities and activities. Christ is the one motive power. Not the command of Christ, not the love of Christ, not the glory of God, not the peril or guilt or possibilities of souls, no one of these alone is the great controlling force, but Christ Himself." The prince of missionaries is represented as saying,

> "Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you,
> Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed:
> Lo! with no winning words I would entice you,
> Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.
>
> "Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,
> Yes, without stay of father or of son,
> Lone on the land and homeless on the water
> Pass I in patience till the work be done."

V. *The results.* No one can read the New Testament or the writings of friends or enemies of the truth without being impressed with the thought that Christianity is a victorious faith. The success of Pentecost was a forecast of what was to come. Triumphs are scored on every field. The apostles are spoken of as the men that had turned the world upside down. The elders in Jerusalem said to Paul, "Thou seest, brother, how many myriads there are among the Jews of them that have believed." The charge made against this man by the Jews was that he taught all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and the temple. They were alarmed and wanted to take his life. Their fear is a measure of the progress of the truth. Persecutions show the same thing. If no victories were being

won, the authorities would have ignored it. They saw it making progress in all ranks, in the army, in the court, among scholars, everywhere. Writing to the Romans the apostle said, "Your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world." To the Colossians he spoke of the gospel which they heard, and which was preached in all creation under heaven. It could be said of the missionaries that their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world. Early in the fourth century the Emperor was numbered among the converts. His conversion is an indication of the triumph of the gospel. With the conversion of Constantine persecution for the sake of the Name ceased. What had been the consolation of the slave and the fugitive in the catacombs became the creed of the statesman and the magistrate, and the cross was blazoned on the banner of the Empire.

XI

PAUL'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS MISSIONS

ROM. 1 : 13–16; 15 : 19–21

PAUL gloried in the fact that he was called of God to be a missionary to the heathen. At the time of Paul's conversion the Lord said to Ananias, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel." Paul was profoundly concerned about the salvation of his own countrymen; he wanted to stay in Jerusalem and preach to them. But the Lord said to him, "Depart, for I will send thee forth far hence to the Gentiles." He went out into the heathen world, and published the gospel of the grace of God everywhere. Later in his life we hear him say, "Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry." The record of his work as a missionary fills a large place in The Acts. Of one of his missionary tours, Stalker affirms that in its issues it far outrivalled the expedition of Alexander the Great when he carried the arms and civilization of Greece into the heart of Asia, or that of Cæsar when he landed on the shores of Britain, or even the voyage of Columbus when he discovered a new world. The whole world is different from what it would have been because of what Paul did while serving Christ as a foreign missionary. He made all nations his beneficiaries.

There are a few sentences used by Paul which deserve special attention, because they furnish clues to his thought on this subject. The first one that I wish you to consider with me is this, "Oftentimes I purposed to come to you." He earnestly desired to preach in Rome, as he had preached in Antioch and Athens and Corinth and Ephesus and other large

centres of population. He wanted some fruit in the capital of the Empire, as in other parts of the heathen world. While in Ephesus he purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." After visiting Rome it was his intention to go on to Spain. Having received the gospel he could not keep its treasures of grace and glory to himself. From the time the Holy Spirit said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," he found no rest. He was constantly in motion. He must reach the unevangelized with the message of salvation. He preached through western Asia; he crossed over into Europe and preached in the principal cities of that continent. Speaking of his work he said that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ. To all the people in that vast sweep of country he had made Christ known. He knew that it was the purpose of God that all men everywhere should hear the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation. He knew that the parting command of the Redeemer was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." He could not be idle or indifferent. He was "elect unto obedience." There was no place in his life for excuses or apologies.

The Lord had said, "I will show him how many things he must suffer for My sake." He was stoned, he was beaten with rods, he was shipwrecked, he was in perils many times; he was hungry, he was cold, he was weary, he was sick, he was anxious; he was assured that in every city bonds and afflictions were waiting for him: but none of these things moved him, or caused him to change his plans or to abate his ardour. He was called to do a work for God, and he must obey. Some boatmen said to their commander, "It is impossible to cross this stream in such a storm." He replied, "I do not know that it is impossible; I do know that it must be attempted." So Paul felt. People might say that he was beside himself, that much

learning had made him mad; they might deny his apostleship and denounce him as a fraud; they might sneer at him as a babbler and call his message foolishness: it was for him to do his duty. He had a high and holy mission to accomplish, and he must do it at any hazard and at any cost.

> "Or if the ache of travel or of toil
> Would sometimes bring a short, sharp cry of pain
> From agony of fever, blain or boil,
> 'Twas but to crush it down and on again."

At Lystra he was stoned and dragged out as dead. In Philippi he was scourged and thrust into the inner prison. All the while he was planning new campaigns and new conquests. Though his plans were hindered more than once, he did not give up in despair. He had one supreme ambition, and that was to finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. He gathered bright young men about him and trained them. He make them partakers of his service and of his joy. Paul was constantly thinking how he could best do the Lord's work.

Others have felt the same. They knew the Lord's will and they were concerned to do it. William Carey purposed in his heart to preach the gospel to the unsaved. He found a way to India. There were obstacles in his path. But these did not daunt him. He was opposed and ridiculed; but he kept right on. It would be as easy to turn the sun from his course as to turn Carey from the main purpose of his life. Livingstone said, "I am ready for any movement, provided it is a forward movement." He suffered from fever, from prostration, from the desertion of servants, from the opposition of Arab slave-traders; but he did not stop. He saw his goal and kept on, and on, and on, till his strength was exhausted. He saw no church planted; he did not see the slave-trade abolished or even checked: that did not matter. Others have not gone

out as workers into the regions beyond, but they have lived to support those who did go. They felt that they could make money and be more useful at home than on the field. This was the great purpose of their lives, and everything else was subordinate to it. There are preachers and teachers and bankers and mechanics and servants whose leading thought is about the salvation of the world. This is their ruling passion. Their first prayer when they awake in the morning and their last prayer when they lie down at night is that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of God.

The second saying of Paul to be considered is this, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." He recognized the fact that the gospel had been given him in trust for the unsaved. So he said, "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth our hearts." As soon as he became a disciple of Christ, he felt called upon to open the eyes of the blind, that they might turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. He said, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me, if I preach not the gospel." In seeking to fill the world with the knowledge of Christ he was only doing his duty. He was acting as a steward of the manifold grace of God. Some would not receive his message. Some drove him out of their coasts. Some plotted to take his life. What then? Did that end his obligation? By no means. It was his business to proclaim the truth, whether the people would hear, or whether they would forbear. If he were chased out of one city he would hurry on to the next. If his own people would not hear him he would go to the heathen. In one place he said to them, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you; but seeing you put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles; for so hath God commanded, saying, 'I have set thee for a light to the nations, that thou shouldest be for My

salvation unto the ends of the earth.' " Paul urged the believers not to defraud, not to purloin, but to show all good fidelity; to provide things honest in the sight of all men; to owe no man anything. The honesty which he inculcated he exemplified in his own life. He was in debt to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, to the wise and to the foolish. As an honest man he sought to pay that debt. It was not a matter of sentiment or of sympathy, but a matter of duty. It was a just claim and as an honest man there was only one course for him to pursue. He traveled far and wide and preached the gospel in the principal cities of the Empire. If the churches contributed to defray his expenses, he was thankful. If they did not, he worked with his own hands and supplied his own needs. His duty was to help Christ evangelize the world, and he did that in season and out of season till he sealed his testimony with his blood.

Others have felt and acted in the same way. Andrew found his own brother Simon and brought him to Jesus. That was his first impulse on discovering the Lord. Philip found Nathaniel and said, "We have found the Messiah." On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was given. At once the apostles began to preach. The authorities soon began to object. The apostles said, "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." The truth was like a fire shut up in their bones, and they could not but speak. There are those in our own times who have felt as Paul did. They realize that they are under obligation to obey the last command of the risen Christ. They are willing to go anywhere. The Moravians recognized that they were debtors to all who had not the gospel. They went to Greenland, to Labrador, to the West Indies, to the South Seas; they were willing to sell themselves as slaves, or to be shut in with lepers that they might have the privilege of preaching Christ to them. A business man said, "If I cannot go I can send—and a better man than myself at that." For some time he has been paying all the expenses of a foreign

missionary. He receives letters from him from time to time, and follows his work with the greatest interest and delight. Nothing could induce him to surrender the joy of this service. If he is prospered he expects to undertake the support of two Japanese evangelists. There are men and women who live in smaller houses, and wear plainer clothing, that they may pay what they owe. They talk about this work; they pray for it; they take a personal and passionate and perennial interest in it. They feel about it as the Psalmist did about Jerusalem, "If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I prefer thee not above my chief joy."

The third statement to be considered is this, "I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome." He had preached in other cities; he held himself in readiness to preach in the capital of the Empire. He was ready to preach anywhere and everywhere. Paul was a ready man. He was ready not only to be bound, but to die for the Lord Jesus. He was ready for service and for sacrifice as the Lord might choose. When the Lord Jesus met him in the way to Damascus he asked Him, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" He did not stop to confer with flesh and blood. That was his question ever after. His will was pliant and submissive to the will of Christ. There was no desire to evade duty; he was ever on the alert; he watched for opportunities. In Rome though he was chained to a soldier he preached the kingdom of God in his own hired house with all boldness.

David had it in his heart to build a house for the Lord. He was ready and eager to do it. The Lord told him that his son and successor would do that. Forbidden to build, David collected a great store of materials. He did what he could. Henry Martyn went out to India and preached to scornful civilians and soldiers. On his arrival he said, "Now let me burn out for God."

"No nobler utterance since the world began,
From lip of saint or martyr, ever ran
Electric through the sympathies of man."

His health failing he was obliged to leave India. On the way home by way of Persia and Turkey he argued with the ablest Mohammedan mollahs and vanquished them. He died in a stable with a saddle for a pillow and was buried among strangers. He was ready, as was Paul, to preach the gospel among the unevangelized. Harriet Newell died soon after reaching the mission field. She said, "I have no regret that I left my native land for Christ. It was in my heart, like David, to do a work for God, and my desire is accepted of Him." She was ready for service and in her brief and bright career did all she was able. Young McCall said, "Lord, I gave myself, body, mind and soul, to Thee. I consecrated my whole life and being to Thy service, and now, if it please Thee to take myself, instead of the work I would have done for Thee, what is that to me? Thy will be done." Of Samuel John Mills it is said that from the time he was sixteen his heart glowed with one passion, to bear the gospel to the nations sitting in darkness. To a friend he said, "Though you and I are very little beings, we must not be satisfied till we have made our influence felt in the remotest part of this ruined world." He died in his youth, and did not preach in the regions beyond. But he was ready. The American Board and the American Bible Society are among the precious fruits of his life and teaching.

Mackay of Uganda was ready to preach Christ among the degraded and demonized tribes of Central Africa. Some pitied him. They spoke of the sacrifice he was making. He did not count it a sacrifice to be a pioneer of Christ and civilization. He said, "I would not exchange places for the world. A powerful race here is to be won for Christ, men are to be brought to love God and one another, and, in order to that, institutions that have lasted for ages must be uprooted, wisdom

has to be implanted. Who would not give his life for such a noble work as that?" John Williams felt the same in the South Seas. He was ready to enter every open door. He could not content himself within the limits of a single reef. He built a ship and carried the gospel to every group of islands within two thousand miles. Had he lived to be threescore and ten, no one can safely predict how much farther he would have gone in his evangelistic work.

Alexander Duff was urged to abandon his work in India, and settle down as a minister or teacher in Scotland. He felt irritated and humiliated by such proposals. He regarded it as an insult that he should be asked to retreat from the forefront of the battle into the easy, and yet respectable, comfort of the baggage. So far as personal comfort was concerned, he would rather be the occupant of the poorest hut, with its homeliest fare, in the coldest and wildest and bleakest mountain parish in Scotland, than to be the possessor of the stateliest palace, with it royal appurtenances, in the plains of Bengal. Twice he was shipwrecked, barely escaping with his life; more than once he was well-nigh foundered amid gales and hurricanes of the deep; thrice he was brought to the gates of the grave by the noxious influences of an unfriendly climate. It was not because he could not do better that he went to India; he could have made ten times as much at home. He heard God's call, and he was eager to obey. An African missionary said, "I am one of those whose dead bodies fill the trenches to make it easier for others to come after us, and walk over us, and take the citadel." Another wrote, "I have lost my only horse—the gift of a friend—and a horse here is a fortune, an acquisition beyond our means. But though no longer young, I am ready cheerfully to tramp the burning sand and deep mud under this torrid sun, to make known, as far as I can, the glad tidings of salvation." Young Milne wanted to go to China. His appearance was against him. He was asked if he would go as a servant. He replied at once, "Yes, sir, most certainly; I am willing to be

anything, so I can be in the work. To be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water is too great an honour for me *when the Lord's house is building*."

There are those who are ready to go or send. A father and mother gave their only daughter for China. They said, "She is very precious to us; but we have nothing too precious to give to the Lord Jesus Christ." A teacher in the public schools, who cannot go herself on account of frail health, gives half her income and supports a substitute. These have the Pauline spirit. They are ready to as much as in them lies. Their feeling is expressed in the lines,

> "Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a present far too small;
> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my life, my soul, my all."

A famous English regiment has upon its standard the word, "Anywhere." It is ready for service in India, in Afghanistan, in the Soudan, in Zululand, or in any other part of the globe.

The fourth statement that we shall study is this, "I am not ashamed of the gospel." The reason assigned is, "For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Paul had tasted the good word of God and the power of the world to come. He knew by what the gospel did for him what it would do for all who would receive its teaching and walk in its light. It was not then as it is now. Its Author had recently died on the cross as a criminal. His followers were spoken of as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things. They were said to consist of idiots, infants, silly women, and men devoid of sense and reason. They were charged with the most shameless crimes. Cartoons represented them as worshipping the head of an ass. Tacitus spoke of the new faith as "a detestable superstition." Julian spoke of it as "atheism." To be a Galilean was to be

guilty of every conceivable offense. No further evidence of criminality was needed. But Paul knew that the gospel was true and that it had in it the power of an endless life. He knew that the risen and glorified Redeemer was destined to fill and control all things. He saw in the far dispensation of the fullness of times a redeemed world, and he was not ashamed of the instrument by which this redemption was effected. Paul knew that the world needed the gospel, and he rejoiced that he was counted worthy to be one of its heralds. The Jew and the Greek and the Roman might sneer and scoff; their sneers and scoffs could not affect his deepest convictions.

We think of the gospel after it has been bearing fruit for nearly nineteen centuries. We see its beneficent influence in every sphere of thought and action. We see that its history is the history of progress and liberty. We know that Macaulay spoke the simple truth when he said that it has promoted justice, and mercy and freedom, and arts and sciences, and good government, and domestic happiness; that it has struck the chains from the slave; that it has mitigated the horrors of war, raised women from slaves and playthings into companions and friends; that it has brought comfort to the sorrowing, and has brightened the great mystery of the grave. We agree with him that to oppose such a faith is to commit high treason against humanity and civilization. So closely is the gospel connected with all social and moral progress, that James Russell Lowell challenged sceptics to find a place on the globe ten miles square, where a man can live in decency, comfort and security, supporting and educating his children, unspoiled and unpolluted; a place where age is reverenced, infancy respected, manhood respected, womanhood honoured, and human life held in due regard—where the gospel of Christ has not gone and cleared the way, and laid the foundations, and made decency and security possible. We say with him that it is the gospel that has made society possible and life

tolerable, and robs death of its terrors and the grave of its gloom. A Hindu priest said to a missionary, "Sir, please impart to me the secret. What is it that makes the Bible of yours have such power over the lives of those who embrace it? Now, it is only eight months since the people joined you. Before, they were quarrelsome; they were riotous; they were lazy; they were shiftless: and now see what a difference there is in them! They are active, energetic, laborious; they never drink; they never quarrel. What is it that makes the Bible have such power over the lives of those who profess it? Our Vedas have no such power. Please, sir, give me the secret." The gospel of Christ will transform any soul that will believe. It has won its triumphs on every field and from every rank of society. It has changed heart, and thought, and character; it has reconstructed society.

In Paul's day the wise men and the mighty men and the noble had nothing to do with Christianity. It was said to be a religion for tanners, and tailors, and weavers, and rustics, and illiterate fellows, for simple people and for slaves. The learned and the prudent held aloof from this mushroom sect that was everywhere spoken against. Since then we have seen men of the greatest ability and the ripest scholarship among the followers of the Crucified One. We can point to such men as Origen, Augustine, Bernard, Pascal, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Cromwell, Milton, Washington, William the Silent, Wordsworth, Johnson, Moffat, Livingstone, Heber, Herschell, Gladstone, Bright, Tennyson, Faraday, Hugh Miller, Chalmers, Shaftesbury, and to such eminent women as Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Fry, Mrs. Browning and Frances Willard. We see that the gospel produces great men and noble women, and that it is the mainspring of all the reformatory movements of the age. It makes provision for the wounded, the sick, the helpless, the insane, the aged, the orphaned, the lapsed. Paul did not see what we see, but he knew that the gospel was God's power to save men from sin, and he was not ashamed of it in

Athens, the cradle and seat of learning, or in Rome, the centre and mistress of the world.

The last sentence that we shall consider at this time is this, "Making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundations; but, as it is written, 'They shall see to whom no tidings of Him came, and they who have not heard shall understand.'" Such was Paul's ambition. Evermore he was seeking to invade new territory, and to set up his banner there in the name of the Lord. Jesus Christ tasted death for every man; He gave Himself a ransom for all. The gospel of Christ is therefore for all men everywhere. It must run to and fro and fill the whole earth. The Romans would have been willing to give Christ a place in the Pantheon. They were hospitable to every faith. The Hindus would be willing to accept Jesus as a new manifestation of Buddha. But the gospel is not one of many faiths. It makes its way by conquest and not by compromise. Jesus Christ is Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all. He is King of kings, and Lord of lords. On His head are many diadems. Christianity is a universal faith; it is not to be confined to any tribe or nation. This thought is set forth in the great commission. "Ye shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The apostles began preaching in Jerusalem. In a little time Samaria was reached. Soon Antioch and Cyprus and Cyrene were evangelized. Paul could speak of the gospel as bearing fruit in all the world. Men and women went out in all directions and told the good news.

In after ages we see the same aggressive spirit. It took a thousand years to convert Europe. The good work went on all the while. There were some periods in which more work was done than in others, but the work never ceased. From Pentecost till the present hour the effort to carry the gospel to every kindred and tongue and tribe and people has been con-

tinuous. There has been no peace and no truce with the powers of darkness. This world belongs by right to our Lord, and He shall have it. Those who have His spirit cannot rest while there is one nation or one soul unevangelized. It is the spirit of Christ that has generated all the missionary activity of the ages. The soul that is Christ's must help Him seek and save the lost. Paul said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me." That was the secret of his missionary enthusiasm and service. Christ used Paul's heart and brain and hands and feet and tongue. That was the reason his spirit found no rest. Christ was in him, and Christ wanted all nations to hear the truth. So, if Christ is in us, we will be missionary. If Christ is in any church, molding its thought and shaping its conduct, that church cannot but be missionary. If we could measure the missionary spirit in any church at any given time, we could tell how much of spiritual life and power the church had at that time. A church that is cold or lukewarm will not be missionary; there is no reason why it should be. But a church that reproduces the life of Christ must be missionary. Christianity must be aggressive and world-embracing or it will perish. It is an old maxim in military matters, that an army that remains in its trenches is beaten in advance. Churches have tried that, and have died of heart failure. If a church is self-contained, like the Dead Sea, which always receives and gives forth nothing, it degenerates into a social club, and ceases to be a church of Christ in any true sense.

Paul's attitude towards missions should be ours. The evangelization of the world should be our first concern; it should be the dominant purpose in our lives. It should colour all our thoughts, and regulate all our expenditures, and determine how we shall use our lives. We should recognize our indebtedness to all who are without a knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ. We are not to consume all we have upon ourselves and to think solely of our own salvation. A man wrote to the mission rooms and said, "We are not fools; we know

how to keep our money." Our Lord called a man a fool who did that very thing. He said, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Some contract debts to gratify the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and use these debts as an excuse for not doing anything to evangelize the world. They say, "We must be just before we can be generous." In contracting these debts they overlooked the prior claims of God and of humanity. As honest men we are bound to pay what we owe. Sometimes a bank clerk uses for himself money belonging to the bank. With our Anglo-Saxon notions of honesty we know how to designate such conduct. The bank clerk who uses money of the bank for himself is doing no worse than the Christian man who uses the Lord's money to gratify his appetite and taste while his just debts remain unpaid. If our mental attitude towards this cause is the same as Paul's we will be ready to go in person or by our prayers and means to make Christ known to those who know Him not. We will not be disposed to make any excuse. We will not say it costs a dollar to send a dollar to the field, and therefore we will give nothing. We will not say there are no results to justify this expenditure, and therefore we will withhold our money. We will do all in our power that the eternal purpose of our God may be accomplished. If we have the spirit of Paul in us we will not be ashamed of the gospel. It can change any life and any nation. It can lift the poor from the dust, and the needy from the dunghill, and set them among the princes of the people. What it has done for the great English-speaking people, it can do for all peoples. It is not one of the ethnic faiths and on a par with them. Christ is not to be classed with Moses and Zoroaster and Buddha and Confucius and Laotsze and Socrates and Mohammed. He is the holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy. He is the only begotten Son of the Father. As we review the progress and magnificent triumphs of the gospel we will glory in it. Finally, as the followers of Christ and filled with His

spirit we will go out into the regions beyond and win the people there to the belief and obedience of the truth as it is in Jesus. We will be content with nothing less than world-wide conquest. If we should think of our own delight simply, if we should eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send no portions to those for whom nothing has been prepared, we shall fail in the attempt, and our very blessings will be cursed. If we feel about this work as Paul did, happy are we, for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon us.

XII

THE NEW TESTAMENT MODEL CHURCH

1 Thess. 1: 1–10

THERE is one church that is spoken of in the New Testament as a model church. In the seventh verse of this chapter the apostle says, "Ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia." The Greek word translated "ensample" is sometimes translated pattern or model. When Moses was about to build the tent of meeting, he was told to make all things according to the pattern or model showed him in the mount. Writing to the church in Thessalonica, Paul says, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at His coming? For ye are our glory and our joy." Again he says, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father." And once more, "Being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear unto us." There must have been something very unusual about this church to call forth such encomiums from this divinely-inspired man. We know he was not indulging in flattery; he says he was not. He was speaking words of truth and soberness. As we study what is written about this church we are impressed —

I. With the thought that it was made up of people who had received the truth as it is in Jesus. Paul says, "And for this

cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, *even the word* of God, ye accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe." They did not listen to some cunningly devised fable, but to the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation. By this gospel they were radically changed in heart, in thought, in character, and in conduct. They turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come.

In the seventeenth chapter of The Acts we are told of the founding of this church. On being driven out from Philippi, Paul and Silas passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica. There, as his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue and showed from the Scriptures that the Christ must suffer and rise from the dead, and alleged that the Jesus he preached was the Christ. "And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." The Thessalonian Christians had been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth.

II. This church adorned the doctrine of God its Saviour. So we read, "Ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord." They had the mind of the Master. They reproduced His life. They walked in His steps and manifested His Spirit. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. Their lives were in harmony with the gospel which they professed to accept as their sole rule of faith and practice.

To be sure, the Thessalonians were not perfect. They had not attained, but they were following after, if that they might apprehend that for which they had been apprehended of Christ Jesus. While exhorting them to do better, the apostle admits

that they were doing remarkably well. "We beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, even as ye do walk, —that ye abound more and more." The word "abound" is one of the great words of the New Testament. It signifies enough, and more than enough, even a surplus. The conduct of this church was such as to please God. The apostle concedes this and praises them for it. But he would have them unsatisfied with any attainments or achievements, however great. He would have them do better thence again, and better still, in infinite progression. They were to be content with nothing less than perfection. Again, "But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another; for indeed ye do it towards all the brethren that are in all Macedonia. But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more." There were no cliques or parties in that church. No class distinctions had as yet appeared. The members had the same earnest care each for the other. Their faith grew exceedingly, and the love of each one towards one another abounded. Paul admits this and glories in it. But he would have them love each the other a little more than they had ever done. His thought was the same as that expressed by John, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; for every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." And again, "Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do." This church was left in its infancy without any competent oversight. In the absence of a settled ministry each one was to exhort the other and to build the other up on his most holy faith. They were doing that. Very good. But keep right on. Let no one think exclusively of his own things, but let each one think also of the things of others. In this they would fulfill the royal law and would do well.

We are not to think that this church had no trials or opposition. We are told that they "received the word in much affliction." When the Jews saw the triumphs the gospel was winning they took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason sought to bring the apostles forth to the people. And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus." So high did the feeling run that it was deemed prudent to send Paul and Silas away by night to Berœa. The leaders having escaped, the church had to bear all that Jewish jealousy and malice could inflict. The record shows that they were not daunted in the least. They had no thought of denying their Lord and going back to the old faiths which they had renounced. So steadfast were they in their allegiance to Christ, that the apostle said, "We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and in all the afflictions which ye endure." He speaks not only of their faith and patience and endurance, but also of their joy in the Holy Spirit. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of the Lord Jesus. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods.

III. This is a missionary church. Thus we read, "For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to Godward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything." The expression "sounded forth" signifies as through a trumpet. The truth was not whispered in a corner, or spoken with bated breath behind closed doors. It was sounded out from the house tops. The notes in which it found expression were clear and loud and long. They burst through the valleys, echoed over the hills, and penetrated every hamlet

and homestead. They were heard all through that province, and all through the adjoining province, and far beyond the limits of those provinces.

Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia, and Corinth was the capital of Achaia. People were coming from all parts of the province to the capital, and going from the capital to all parts of the province in turn. Soldiers, merchants, tradesmen and others were coming and going all the time. All who spent any time in Thessalonica heard of the new faith and the changed and ennobled lives of its advocates and champions. A faith working such marvellous transformations could not be hid. Paul said it was unnecessary for him to say anything. If such a church could be found to-day it would not be necessary for any member of it to advertise it. The entire community would hear and know of it. The editors of the great daily papers would send reporters to write about it. The whole world would be informed of the life and work of such a church.

IV. This was a most liberal church. In the eighth chapter of Second Corinthians Paul speaks of the grace of God which had been given in the churches of Macedonia. This was one of them. This was the second church founded in Europe, the church in Philippi being the first. Paul tells us how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. "For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints; and this, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God." It is proper to say that this was not a rich church; it was a very poor church. Nevertheless its giving was on such a magnificent scale as to call forth this tribute. The tribute is all the more remarkable when we remember how high the ideals were which were cherished by the great

apostle to the nations. The Christians in Thessalonica did not wait for an appeal. They anticipated appeals and brought their offerings and laid them at the apostles' feet and asked them to administer the same. They did this because they had first consecrated themselves to God and to His service. While the apostle acknowledges all that they had done, and while he praises them for it, he does not tell them that they had done enough. He says, "But as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." In doing so the sincerity of their love would be demonstrated.

Here then is the New Testament conception of the model church. It was a church made up of people who gladly embraced the truth when it was preached in their hearing; a church that adorned the doctrine of God their Saviour; a church whose members conducted themselves so as to please God; a church whose members loved one another and sought to edify one another; a Spirit-filled church; a church that sounded out the truth so that all those about it and those far beyond it heard the message of salvation; a church that gave so liberally as to astonish and to delight the large-hearted man who had begotten them to a living hope through the gospel; a church that did not need to be solicited for offerings, but gave of its own accord for the Lord's work, and rejoiced that it was permitted to do so.

Perhaps it should be stated that even in this glorious church there was a disorderly element. If it were not so we might be tempted to think that the Thessalonians were made of different clay from the rest of mankind. I think the whole truth is told to prevent any misconception of that nature. Some were quarrelsome; some would not work at all, but were busybodies; some were unstable. Paul urges them to be at peace among themselves. "And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering towards all." Those that would not work

should not eat. The disorderly and the busybodies were commanded and exhorted in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. They were not to be weary in well-doing. They were not to render evil for evil to any, but always to follow after that which is good, one towards another, and towards all. No doubt the unruly element was a small element. The greater part lived so as to justify the apostle in speaking of the church as a model.

There is a piece of music entitled "The Model Church." One hears it sung in public worship. An aged man went to church. The usher did not notice that his clothes were worn and that he was poor, and gave him a front seat. The choir sang Coronation so grandly that the old man forgot his age and deafness and poverty and faded clothing, and felt as a mariner who caught sight of shore. He went home and said, "Well, wife, I've found the model church, and worshipped there to-day." It is not necessary to say that the artist's conception of a model church, when compared with that of Paul, was a beggarly one. Paul thought of a congregation of redeemed souls walking in the light, imitating Christ and His apostles, enduring opposition and persecution joyfully, filled with the Holy Spirit, living so as to please God, walking in love, each helping the other; a missionary church sounding out the invitation of mercy as through a trumpet; a church so liberal that it gave to the extent of its ability, and beyond its ability; a church that brought its money and laid it on the Lord's altar and asked the apostles to take upon them the administering of their bounty.

Suppose each and every one of the churches in our fellowship measured up to this standard, what would be the result? we would be able to do anything and everything that the Lord wants us to do in His name. Why should not the churches of to-day be equal in all respects and superior to the church in Thessalonica? We live in far more propitious times. Our advantages are much greater. That church was founded in a series of

meetings that lasted only three weeks. At the end of that time its founders were driven away by persecution. The young church was left to its own resources. In our day persecution is unknown. We have an open Bible and helpful ministries of all kinds. By taking advantage of our privileges and auxiliaries we can do all and be all and more than the church in Thessalonica. The Lord help us to study His word, that we may do His will, and come to be ensamples to all with whom we have to do.

XIII

TWO NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

Acts 2: 41-47; 11: 20-24; 13: 1-3

LET us study some features of two apostolic churches, the church in Jerusalem and the church in Antioch. These were the most influential churches in the first period of our era. The church in Jerusalem was the first church established and was the mother of all Jewish Christians. The church in Antioch was the mother and metropolis of Gentile Christendom. No other churches, no matter how great their membership or their wealth or their service, can ever take the place of these two. Let us consider —

I. *The founding of these churches.* The church in Jerusalem dates its origin from the first Pentecost after the death and resurrection and ascension of our Lord. He charged His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, the promise of the Holy Spirit. When the day of Pentecost came the disciples were all together in one place, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. When the multitude came together Peter preached the first sermon of the new dispensation. The conclusion of his sermon was that God had made Jesus the crucified both Lord and Christ. Many of those that heard were pricked in their heart, and asked what they should do. The answer was, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many

as the Lord our God shall call unto Him." With many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." They then that received His word were baptized: and there were added to them in that day about three thousand souls. Thus the first church was planted. Peter was the chief spokesman, but all the apostles were present. The gospel was preached; a large number heard, believed, repented, and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. All that was said and done that day was said and done under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

We do not know the names of the men who established the church in Antioch. We know they were from Cyprus and Cyrene. They were Hellenistic Jews and therefore were naturally more liberal than the Jews of Palestine. They were among those who were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen. They had been speaking to Jews only, but when they came to Antioch they spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord." A little time before that Peter had preached to Cornelius and his family in Cæsarea. While he was yet speaking the Holy Spirit fell on them that heard the word. Cornelius and his household spoke with tongues and magnified God. Seeing this Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. When the church in Jerusalem heard these things and Peter's explanation they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." Prior to this time the gospel was confined to Jews and to Jewish proselytes. We are told that those who were scattered abroad by persecution travelled as far as to Phenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. It is all but certain that the Hellenistic Jews who preached in Antioch heard of what had taken place in Cæsarea. There was frequent and easy communication between the two places. Learning what Peter had done, and the divine ap-

proval of his course, and the ratification of the same by the Jerusalem church, these nameless evangelists were emboldened to speak to the Greeks in Antioch. As a result this church which played so notable a part in the early years of Christianity was founded. No apostle was present. There were no visible demonstrations of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. No miracle was wrought in attestation of the truth spoken. But a great number believed and turned to the Lord. These redeemed souls constituted the church in Antioch. In both cases the believers could say, "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures." They were begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto them.

II. *The growth of these churches.* It is said of the church in Jerusalem that the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved. Evidently, there was a continuous revival. In view of the conditions it could hardly have been otherwise. The converts continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and felowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. Many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. The believers had all things in common. Those that had possessions and goods sold them and parted them to all, according as any had need. "And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people." Such a community was a new thing under the sun. It is not surprising that there were daily additions to it.

It was not long before the church encountered opposition and persecution. The apostles were apprehended and thrust into prison. But the word of God was not bound. The church flourishes under persecution as it cannot under prosperity and popularity. So we read that many of them that heard the word

believed, and the number of the men came to be about five thousand. In so large a number it was inevitable that some would be actuated by unworthy motives. Of this class were Ananias and his wife Sapphira. They lied to the Holy Spirit about the land they sold, ostensibly for the common welfare. After their death it is stated that believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. In such a congregation it need surprise no one that some friction developed. The Grecian Jews murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, were appointed over that business. Then the murmuring ceased, and the church had peace and prospered. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied exceedingly and a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith." The fact that the priests were reached and won is significant. Naturally they would have been the last to accept the new faith. When they were enrolled in such large numbers we may be sure that the church was in a most flourishing condition.

We do not have any statistics showing the growth in Antioch. The information given is couched in the most general terms. What is said is sufficient to indicate remarkable gains in numbers and in influence. I have already quoted what is written about the men that first preached in that city. "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned to the Lord." When the church in Jerusalem heard of the founding of this church they sent Barnabas to Antioch to look into matters and to take the oversight of the same. It is said of Barnabas that he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. On his arrival he saw the grace of God and was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. This pregnant saying follows, "And much people was added to the Lord." Barnabas soon found the work too great for

his strength and he went to Tarsus to seek Saul. These two men spent a whole year in the church in Antioch and taught much people. Here for the first time it became apparent that the church was not a sect of the Jews. Many of the members, perhaps most of them, were Gentiles. In Jerusalem the believers continued stedfastly with one accord in the temple. They observed the Mosaic rites and ceremonies. In Antioch it was different. In Antioch there was no temple. A vast number of the converts were Greeks. Christ was preached and magnified, and so it came to pass that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Their devotion to Christ separated them from Judaism and from Heathenism. We learn from sources outside of the Scriptures that the church in Antioch had a marvellous growth. In Chrysostom's day its membership numbered one hundred thousand. Antioch was the third city of the empire, Rome and Alexandria being the first and the second. Half the population were Christians.

III. *The relation of these churches to the cause of missions.* For some considerable time the church in Jerusalem gave no thought to the peoples living outside that city. The apostles were active in and about the temple. We read, "And day by day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ." Their preaching and healing in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth gave offense to the rulers and to the priests and to the scribes. They were strictly charged not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. They said to the authorities, "We cannot but speak the things we saw and heard." When they were beaten they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name. We are informed that the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul, and had all things in common. "And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."

This was all very enjoyable and very beautiful; but it was

not in harmony with the parting instructions of their Lord. He told them that they were to be His witnesses both in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Thus far they had confined their testimony to Jerusalem; the rest of their program was overlooked. The death of Stephen marked a new advance. The day he was stoned there arose a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. It is proper to note that they did not go out impelled by the Holy Spirit and under the guidance of the great commission; they were scattered like chaff before the whirlwind of persecution. Even then they did not go very far. For some unknown reasons the apostles remained in the city.

Those that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. They confined their preaching to their own people. They knew that the Lord had said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring; and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one shepherd." They understood His words, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all the nations." They heard Him say, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations." But they had no definite purpose of giving the gospel to any who were not of the seed of Abraham.

Among those that were scattered was Philip. He went down to Samaria and proclaimed Christ to the Samaritans. When they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. The apostles hearing that Samaria had received the word of God sent Peter and John to them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. After conferring this gift they returned to Jerusalem. On the way they

preached in many villages of the Samaritans. Philip was directed by an angel of the Lord to go towards the South. As he was going he fell in with a man of Ethiopia, an officer of great authority under Queen Candace, a Jewish proselyte who had been to Jerusalem to worship. At his invitation Philip ascended his chariot and expounded a portion of the prophecy of Isaiah. From that passage he preached Christ to him, and, at his request, baptized him. After this Philip passed from Azotus to Cæsarea and preached the gospel to all the cities on the way. As a result of this preaching by the scattered disciples the church was established in all Judea and Galilee and Samaria.

About this time Peter, as he passed throughout all the parts, came down to the saints that dwelt in Lydda. There he healed Æneas, a man who had been palsied for eight years. "And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord." From Lydda Peter was called to Joppa. Dorcas lived in Joppa. Peter was sent for in hope that he might restore her to life. He did that. This fact became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the name of the Lord.

While in Joppa Peter received a delegation from Cornelius, a Roman centurion stationed then in Cæsarea. Cornelius was instructed by an angel of God to send to Joppa for the apostle. Peter was not prepared to go. He did not think it a lawful thing for him to do. It was necessary for the Lord to show him his duty. While Peter was in a trance the Lord showed him a great sheet let down from heaven by the four corners upon the earth, wherein were four-footed beasts and creeping things and birds of the air. There came a voice to him saying, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." A voice came the second time, "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." This was done three times. It took that vision and the explanatory events that fol-

lowed to make the will of God clear to Peter. In his address in the house of Cornelius, Peter said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him."

Peter was not the only one that thought it unlawful for a Jew to join himself or to come unto one of another nation. There were those in the Jerusalem church who contended with him on his return from Cæsarea, saying, "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." Peter expounded the matter unto them in order. He told them how Cornelius had sent for him at the suggestion of the angel, and of the vision he saw on the housetop; he concluded by telling them that the Holy Spirit fell on that Gentile household as upon the Jewish believers at the beginning, and asked, "If then God gave unto them the like gift as He did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" The record says that when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

It is clear from what followed that this settlement was not entirely satisfactory to all concerned. There was an element in the church that opposed the admission of the Gentiles on the same terms as the Jews. When Paul and Barnabas returned from the first missionary tour and rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and told how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles, they were met by certain men from Judea who insisted that, unless the converts from paganism were circumcised after the custom of Moses, they could not be saved. The first church council was held to consider this matter. The council decided that it was not necessary for the converts from paganism to keep the Mosaic law. This appeared to satisfy all parties for the time being. But there were those in the church that were disposed to contest this position. They fol-

lowed Paul from place to place; they denied his apostleship; they vilified his name; they thwarted his teaching; they impugned his authority; they refused to regard him and his converts as brethren. They darkened and embittered his life to the end. It took Peter a long time to get rid of his Jewish prejudices and convictions; it is very likely that he never was completely emancipated from them. For when he visited Antioch Paul withstood him to the face, because he stood condemned. "For before that certain came from James Peter ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing those that were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation." The Jew was the Brahmin of that time. It was not easy for him to overcome his prejudices and to regard all mankind as equals.

It is as clear as a sunbeam that the church in Jerusalem was not a missionary church. It organized no propaganda in harmony with the great commission. It sent no agents out into the regions beyond. It did not cordially endorse the efforts that were put forth by others to win all races and all peoples to Christ. On the contrary, some members of that church maintained that the Gentiles must become Jews and live as Jews if they would be saved. The Jerusalem church was acquainted with those great words, "I have set thee for a light to the nations, that thou shouldest be for salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth"; and with those other words, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." They heard the words of the Lord as found in the prophecy of Zephaniah, that "men should worship Jehovah every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." They remembered the command given on the mountain in Galilee and later on Olivet to the effect that they were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the

whole creation. They knew what they had been taught, but there was no whole-hearted acceptance of the missionary enterprise as of God. The Jewish church put forth no efforts to reach all mankind with the gospel of salvation.

The church in Antioch being made up largely of Gentiles was free from race pride and from the exclusiveness that such pride engenders. Their sympathies went out beyond themselves from the very beginning. They heard of the famine predicted by Agabus and they determined every man according to ability to send relief unto the brethren in Judea: "which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." When these men had fulfilled this ministration they returned from Jerusalem. "Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." We are not told what it was that these men had on their hearts at the time. But it is probable that they were praying for guidance and assistance in relation to the work of giving the gospel to the Christless nations around them. The revelation of the Spirit at that time would seem to indicate this. It has been finely said that when a people are ready to do the will of God from the heart, they will soon hear a voice behind them saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." The command of the Holy Spirit was in all likelihood a direct answer to the deepest prayer of their hearts. They had themselves tasted of the good word of God and the power of the world to come; they had been made partakers of the Holy Spirit; and they wanted all others to share with them in the glorious blessings of redemption. They were desirous that all others would abstain from eating "the poisoned grapes of Heathendom and should pluck the fair fruits which grow

upon the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God." The church was ready to act; Barnabas and Saul were ready to go. There is no intimation that any one suspected that the course proposed was either unlawful or improper.

It was from Antioch that Barnabas and Saul started on the first missionary tour; it was to Antioch they returned and rehearsed all the things that the Lord had done with them. It was from Antioch that Paul and Silas started on the second missionary tour; and it was to Antioch that they returned. It was from Antioch that Paul started on his third tour. Antioch has the distinction that it was the birthplace of foreign missions. Palos shall always have the honour of being the port from which Columbus started on the voyage which culminated in the discovery of a new world. Antioch shall always be famous as the place where foreign missions had their inception and the place from which foreign missions were conducted in the apostolic age.

The church in Jerusalem was the first church founded. The twelve apostles lived in that city for a dozen years after the ascension. It was foretold by Isaiah that the law should go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. One would naturally expect that would be the centre of all Christian effort. But it was not so. The church in Jerusalem never understood the genius and never grasped the spirit of the great commission, and never sought to go out into all the world to win all people. That honour was reserved for the church in Antioch; because Antioch was not fettered by national prejudices; and because Antioch therefore was a better agent for the accomplishment of God's gracious purpose. For these reasons Antioch eclipsed the Holy City as a centre and stronghold of the faith. Jerusalem lost her primacy; Antioch took her rightful place and her crown.

There is here a great lesson for us. Other things being equal, a missionary church will always be more prosperous than a non-missionary church. A missionary church is in line with

God's purpose and providence and it cannot fail. A missionary church is enterprising, aggressive, efficient, victorious. What is true of a church in this respect is true of other institutions. It is true in politics, in business, in education. The Hermannsburg church sent a large number of its own members to South Africa. The church trained its agents; it built a ship to take them to the field; it supported those that went out. The Lord opened the windows of heaven and poured out a rich blessing upon the church in its work at home. In the pastorate of Louis Harms ten thousand members were received. A visitor asked how long that excitement lasted. The answer was, "It has lasted for seventeen years; ever since the ministry of Louis Harms began." The visitor asked if there were not some unbelievers left in the parish. The answer was, "There is one, and only one." A preacher of the author's communion began his ministry with a church that was in debt and discouraged. He undertook to raise a large missionary offering, and succeeded. The church took heart and soon paid off the debt. A mission church was built. A new church building was erected, one of the very best in the state. The missionary spirit generated by the first offering was the cause of all that was done.

A church that is concerned about the work in all parts of the world will be concerned about the work in its own vicinity. The light that shines farthest will shine the brightest at home. The church that has no concern for anything beyond its own neighbourhood will very soon not feel any concern about its own neighbourhood. It is by giving out, that we receive. It is when we go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation, that we can claim the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." It is only when we go and thus preach that we have any claim upon this exceeding great and precious promise. Without His presence and help we can do nothing; with them we can do all things.

In his farewell address, speaking to the people about obeying the law of God, Moses said, "It is not a vain thing for you;

because it is your life." The same may be said to the church concerning the missionary enterprise. It is not an indifferent thing; but an absolute necessity: it is not a trifle, but a matter of life and death. It is not simply the well-being of the church that is at stake, but its very existence. The church that will heartily and joyfully support the cause of missions will live and prosper and will enjoy the loving favour of God; the church that will refuse to support this cause will be forever undone. God will leave that church to its fate, and will raise up another that will do all His righteous will. May He anoint our eyes with eyesalve that we may see our whole duty, and may He so move upon us by His Spirit that we shall perform it with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

XIV

THE CALL FROM MACEDONIA FOR HELP

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.—Acts 16: 6–10.

RAMSAY thinks this is in many respects the most remarkable paragraph in The Acts. In these four verses the Divine action is introduced three times, marking and justifying the new and great step which is made at this point. On three distinct occasions the guidance of God is manifested in three different ways. While on the second missionary tour Paul and Silas went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia. They had gone as far as Paul and Barnabas had gone on the first tour. At this point they proposed to turn to the west and preach the gospel in the Roman province of Asia. Ephesus was their destination. The Holy Spirit forbade them to go in that direction. When they were come over against Mysia they assayed to go into Bithynia. That would have taken them in a northeasterly direction. But the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not. Impelled forward as they were there was only one course open to them. Taking

that course they found themselves at Troas. It is clear that the going of these men to Troas was unforeseen and unforeseeable. "The whole point of the paragraph is that Paul and Silas were driven on to the city against their own judgment and intention." They were disposed to continue their labours within narrower limits. It is evident that neither Troas nor Europe was in their plans or in their thoughts. To them Europe was an unknown region. While they were thinking of keeping within easy reach of Antioch and Jerusalem they were caught in the sweep of God's eternal purpose and carried on to Troas, where as they waited further orders they could hear the music made by the waves of the Ægean Sea and could almost see Europe in the distance.

It was not because the people of Europe were ready for the gospel, while the people of Asia and Bithynia were not, that Paul was not allowed to carry out his original purpose. The prohibitions were for other reasons. The records show that the restraint was only temporary. Three years later we find Paul in Ephesus, the capital of Asia. He remained there for two years. So it came to pass that all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. Peter wrote his first Epistle to the elect who were sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The Spirit wrote through John to the seven churches in Asia. Doubtless many other churches were founded in those parts before the end of the apostolic age. It appears that Paul and Silas were kept out of Asia and Bithynia and driven on towards Europe because God in His providence was planning for them to preach on a much wider theatre than they had in contemplation. The introduction of the gospel into Europe could be delayed no longer.

Troas was the scene of the war that Homer immortalized. Troas had been visited on memorable occasions by some of the great men of the world. Xerxes visited it when he undertook to conquer Greece. Alexander the Great visited it, and, at the

tomb of Achilles, girded on his armour and from that goal started to overthrow the ancient and august dynasties of the East. Julius Cæsar visited Troas after the battle of Pharsalia. He proposed to build there the capital of the empire. And now the greatest man that ever walked the earth rested in his triumphal progress on these same poetic shores. He is armed with weapons that are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds. He was sent forth to subdue all the powers of the West and to bring the civilization of a new continent into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The most momentous event in the history of Europe is about to happen. But Europe felt no interest in it; in fact, was unaware of it. The people of Europe bought and sold; they married and gave in marriage; they ate and drank; they slumbered and slept and awaked to work and play, and did not think that the day of their redemption was at hand. And Paul and Silas did not know. They did not suspect that they were to be the chief actors in one of the greatest episodes in the history of mankind.

While they were sleeping at Troas a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." And when he had seen the vision, straightway Paul and his associates sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called them to preach the gospel there. Now all is clear and plain. Paul understands why he was forbidden to speak the word in Asia, and why the Spirit of Jesus did not suffer Him so much as to enter Bithynia, and why he was impelled on to Troas. He saw that God's plan for him was that he should not confine the gospel to the continent of Asia, but should cross the Egean Sea and preach in Europe. Ramsay thinks that Luke was the man that Paul saw in his vision. Phillips Brooks thinks that this man represented and expressed the real needs of the people of Macedonia. I prefer to think that our Lord appeared to the great apostle as a man of

Macedonia and invited him to cross over and help. However that may be, it is well for us to note that Paul and his companions sought to go over at once. They were satisfied that God had called them to preach the gospel in Macedonia. So setting sail from Troas they made a straight course for Samothrace. The next day they were in Neapolis, and from thence in a little while they were in Philippi, a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a *Roman* colony. These men might have urged excuses as others have done since and with less reason. They might have pleaded their inablity to enter this new field, as the church was yet young and small and poor. They might have said that there are many people nearer home who have not heard the joyful message. No excuse was offered or invented. God had called and there was nothing for them to do but to obey. So they started at once and took a straight course.

The sailing of Paul and his company in response to the call of the man of Macedonia marked an epoch in human history. That event led to greater and more far-reaching results than the fall of the Roman empire or the fall of Constantinople or the French Revolution or the battle of Waterloo. W. H. Summers says, "Their voyage was a still more decisive event in the world's history than that of the *Mayflower* to New England. It determined that the great early triumphs of Christianity should not be on the continent where it had its birth, and among the races which seemed most akin to the Jew in their habits of thought, not in Arabia and Persia, in India and China, so much as in that western continent which had given letters to that part of Asia, and now was to receive from Asia in return a new religion."

With such a call Paul and his friends might be pardoned for expecting a very cordial welcome from the people of Macedonia. They may have looked for a delegation of influential citizens to meet them on landing and to provide for their entertainment. Perhaps they looked about and waited for the man that Paul saw in his vision. But there was no one on the shore to wel-

come them and to attend to their needs. The men that God had called to preach to these people were left to shift for themselves. The men of Macedonia did not notice their arrival. If they did they were wholly indifferent to it and to the message they brought. They were not conscious of any need. They had their own temples and gods, and had no thought of looking to the east and to the Jews for any help in religious matters.

It was help they needed, nevertheless. The Divine Spirit selected the precise word to describe their condition. They had art and learning and philosophy and religious faiths of several kinds; but they needed help. What they had could not satisfy the intellect nor give peace to the troubled conscience. Their priests could teach them some things; but their priests had no gospel. They could not tell them how to find salvation. They were blind leaders of the blind. There is salvation in Christ, and there is salvation in none other; for there is none other name given under heaven and among men wherein we must be saved. Nothing can be clearer than this, that humanity without the gospel is helpless. Being without God it is without hope. Greece had great schools and great teachers; she had poets and orators and dramatists and philosophers; but in Greece there were contradictory systems of thought; the poor were neglected; the bulk of the people were slaves. In Rome there was social failure. The people were corrupt. They lost their ancient liberties. Their strength was sapped by their vices. One has only to read the first chapter of Romans to learn the condition of society when God is not known and honoured and obeyed. It has ever and always been so. Where the gospel has not gone the people are degraded and spiritually destitute. They need help. This is as true of the Brahmin and Mandarin and Daimyo as it is of the coolie and pariah. The people of Macedonia did not want help, but they needed help. They needed the very message the apostle brought.

So unconcerned were they that Paul and Silas were in the city certain days without being able to accomplish anything worthy of mention. There was no synagogue in the city of Philippi. On the Sabbath day Paul and Silas went forth without the gate by a riverside, where they supposed there was a place of prayer. There they sat down and spoke to the women who were come together. One woman whose heart God opened gave heed to the things which were spoken by Paul. As a result of this she and her household were baptized. So the first church in Europe was planted. So quietly and modestly the regeneration of a continent began. A little later Paul healed an insane girl. Because of this good act he and Silas were arrested and beaten with rods and were thrust into the innermost prison and their feet made fast in the stocks. Howbeit God's purpose was being carried forward. The jailer and his household are numbered among the converts. Not only so, but the magistrates and many of the people of the city heard of the new faith. Thus the church which Paul spoke of as his joy and crown began its bright career.

This paragraph suggests some things worth considering. The first is this, that God is the author of the missionary enterprise and is interested in its welfare. Every step taken by the apostles out into the wide field destitute of the gospel was taken under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Peter did not go to Cæsarea to preach to the household of Cornelius of his own accord. It took a vision to convince him of his duty. The vision was repeated three times before his prejudices were dislodged. Paul wanted to remain in Jerusalem. He felt that he was peculiarly qualified to preach to his own countrymen. But the Lord would not have it so. Paul was needed in the larger and more difficult field. So the Lord said to him, "Depart, for I will send thee forth far hence to the Gentiles." The church in Antioch did not take the initiative in sending Barnabas and Saul out as missionaries. It was the Holy Spirit who said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I

have called them." The narrative says that they were "sent out by the Holy Spirit." To the members of that great church it no doubt seemed that Barnabas and Saul were needed there more than in any other part of the world. But the Holy Spirit felt otherwise and sent these men out to preach in Cyprus and in Asia Minor. In this instance Paul and Silas had no thought of entering Europe. They were prevented from turning to the left hand and to the right and guided on to Troas. The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Jesus are spoken of as intervening to shape their course. At Troas their further course is made clear and plain. The vision that Paul saw solved the mystery. It was God that opened closed doors and disposed the hearts of His children to enter in and take possession.

From the very first there have been those who looked upon the missionary as an object of pity. He was supposed to be beside himself. Else why should he trouble himself about people that he had never seen and people that had done nothing for him. If he were going out to make money or to serve the nation as an ambassador or as a consul, it would be different. In that event his friends would congratulate him and envy him. They would banquet him and toast him and photograph him. He would be the lion of the hour. But going out as a messenger of Jesus Christ to make Christ and His gospel known he is looked upon as if his mind were diseased. If we hold to the Scriptures at all, we must know and hold that the missionary enterprise is not of man but of God. It originated with Him. He is interested in it and pledged to see it through. Heaven and earth may pass away; but the sure promise of God cannot fail. His purpose cannot be defeated.

Secondly, this paragraph teaches us that new fields are to be entered before everything is done nearer home. The most persistent and plausible objection to world-wide missions is that there is so much to be done at home. If the policy contemplated by this objection had been strictly adhered to from the beginning, the gospel never would have been carried into

Europe. Not only so, but Barnabas and Saul would never have been sent out from Antioch on their first missionary tour. Not only so, but the gospel never would have been preached in Syria or in Arabia or in Persia or in North Africa. Moreover, it would not have been preached in Judea or in Samaria or in Galilee. Nor would it have been preached in Jerusalem outside the precincts of the temple. In this work God's thoughts are not our thoughts; His ways are not our ways. Paul and Silas were impelled across a province. They were not permitted to preach in or to enter the places they had in mind. It was so from the beginning and will be so till the end. The plan of God is that new territory shall be entered as rapidly and as widely as possible. The war is to be carried into the very heart of the enemy's country. The church is to show her enterprise and aggressiveness and determination to conquer. In following this course the work at home is prosecuted with new vigour and with gratifying results. Phillips Brooks says that when a force meant for a large expansion is denied the large expansion which its nature craves, it does not merely fail of the larger work which it is not allowed to do, but it loses its best capacity and power in the narrow field to which it is confined. "Any arrested development, any denial to a power of its true range and scope, not merely limits it, but poisons it, not merely shuts it out of the regions where it wants to go, but makes it work feebly and falsely in the region to which it is confined." The heart must drive the blood to the tips of the fingers and to the ends of the toes and to the roots of the hair and to every part of the body; otherwise the whole head will be sick, and the whole heart will be faint. Missions are not only essential if the world is to be saved, but are indispensable to the preservation of the church's own life and to the accomplishment of the work that lies nearest to it.

Thirdly, we know, from what followed, the effect of this visit to Europe on Paul himself. He concluded at once that

God called him to preach the gospel in the regions beyond. When Peter saw the vision on the housetop in Joppa his ingrained prejudices asserted themselves. He objected and argued. Paul obeyed without a moment's hesitation. In obeying, his own soul was enlarged and enriched; in Europe he came into contact with new peoples and with a new civilization. He was less provincial and more cosmopolitan after this visit than he had been before. He was a broader man and a better man. Matheson has pointed out how Paul's views were modified by his stay in Rome. While there his ideas assumed an imperial aspect. If Paul had been disobedient to the heavenly vision, he would not have written the Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Thessalonians, and the Philippians. Moreover, his own views would have contracted; his soul would have shrunk, and he would have been forgotten long ago. Paul greatened and immortalized himself while carrying the gospel from Asia to Europe.

Fourthly, the Christless nations need help. They may have great military establishments; they may have elaborate systems for ethical culture; they may have religions and temples and priests and all the emblems and instrumentalities of devotion; Europe had all these and more. But Europe needed the gospel; she needed help. She needed a knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, for this knowledge is eternal life. What was true then is true now. Japan has an army and navy of marvellous efficiency; she has philosophy; she has three religious systems; but Japan needs help. She cannot with her own resources conquer her uncleanness and other vices. She may be able to drive the Russian army out of Manchuria and sweep the Russian fleets from the sea; but she is weak and helpless apart from Christ. China has the ethics of Confucius, the highest ethical code in the world outside of that given by Moses; but China needs help if she would lead a complete life. What is true of China is true of India, of Africa, of Korea, of Persia, of Tibet, and of every other people in ex-

istence. The word help expresses the need of every unevangelized people on the globe.

The bulk of the race are now in need of help. They are not all conscious of their spiritual destitution; but some of them are. People come to our mission stations and ask for help in the shape of teachers and preachers and physicians. They offer them land and promise to provide for their needs if they will come and teach them the good words of God. Living men and women begging that missionaries be sent to them are as surely Divine messengers as was the man that Paul saw in his vision at night in Troas.

"Through midnight gloom from Macedon,
The cry of myriads as of one;
The voiceful silence of despair
Is eloquent in awful prayer:
The soul's exceeding bitter cry,
'Come o'er and help us, or we die.'

"How mournfully it echoes on,
For half the earth is Macedon;
These brethren to their brethren call,
And by the Love that loves them all,
And by the whole world's Life they cry,
'O ye that live, behold we die.'"

When Paul saw this man he sought to go into Macedonia straightway, concluding that God had called him to preach the gospel to the people of that place. With as clear an indication of the Divine will, what will our conclusion and action be? Shall we shut our eyes and stop our ears and harden our hearts and do nothing? or shall we follow Paul's example and share in the honour and reward of the final conquest? God help us to decide wisely and to do our full duty.

XV

THE GRACE OF GIVING

2 Cor., 8 and 9

THE disciples of Christ understand some things as well as the apostles did. We understand the conditions of entrance into the Messianic kingdom. We understand the place and meaning of baptism and the Lord's supper. We have studied and mastered the second chapter of The Acts. We are able to guide penitent and believing souls with absolute accuracy and absolute certainty. We can answer the question, "What must we do?" not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but in words which the Holy Spirit teaches. Those who accept this teaching feel the solid rock beneath their feet. They know they are walking in the way God has prescribed. There is one thing, however, that we have not studied with the same diligence and with the same happy results. We have not given due attention to the teaching found in the eighth and ninth chapters of Second Corinthians. The fathers exulted in the thought that they were the advocates of a free gospel. With all due respect to their memories and with the highest appreciation of their services, we may say it is possible that they made a mistake in not laying greater stress on this section of the word of God. They were delighted with the second chapter of The Acts and felt like building their tents and remaining in that vicinity. The atmosphere was pure and bracing; the water was clear and abundant; the landscape was like the garden of the Lord. We shall always need to be familiar with that great chapter; we shall have to preach much from it in our evangelistic services. But we should not forget that those other chapters

were inspired by the same Spirit, and that we must know and do what they teach if we would be perfect, entire, wanting nothing. The eighth and ninth chapters of Second Corinthians have to do with the question of giving. In them Paul is dealing with an episode of his day and with principles that are eternal and applicable to all places and to all times. When we shall have given as much thought to those two chapters and insist as strenuously upon what they enjoin as we have done to the second chapter of The Acts, we shall see the dawn of a better day. It is my purpose to call attention to some of the salient features of this rich portion of sacred Scripture. Please note —

I. *The Holy spirit's estimate of a gift of money.* Six times it is called a "grace," once it is called the grace of God, and once "the exceeding grace of God." The apostle began his discussion by making known to the Corinthians the grace of God which had been given in the churches of Macedonia. Their generosity was a proof of the grace wrought in them by the indwelling Spirit of God. It was a fruit of the Spirit. It was a demonstration of His presence and gracious operation. It is natural for human beings to seek the good things of this life. They wish to surround themselves with what will minister to their comfort and convenience. Giving goes against the grain of our natural inclinations. It is only as we are renewed into the image of Him who created us, that we take pleasure in giving to benefit those who are outside the circle of our friends and relatives. The churches of Macedonia gave of their substance to assist people whom they had not seen and of whom they had no personal knowledge, people of another race. At that time every man was a wolf to his neighbour. The stranger was an enemy and was a legitimate prey. While such notions were current these churches were pouring out their treasures to relieve the poor saints in Jerusalem. They did this because they were partakers of the divine nature.

II. *Two remarkable instances cited.* Referring to the Macedonians the apostle said that "in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." Their joy overflowed their affliction; their liberality overflowed their poverty. Their giving was according to their power, yea, and beyond their power. The spirit of God so moved upon them that they gave on a scale that had no precedent. They were willing to deny themselves that they might give to relieve those whose need was much greater then their own. He states that they gave of their own accord. They were not moved by eloquent appeals; their giving was spontaneous. No doubt many of them had a struggle to make ends meet. Nevertheless they deemed it a privilege to give. They besought the apostles with much entreaty in regard to this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints. Herein is a marvellous thing. I know of nothing like it in all biblical history. After Pentecost the believers laid down their possessions at the apostles' feet and distribution was made as every one had need. There was a voluntary surrender of property for the general good. But here the churches went far beyond that. They importuned the apostle to permit them to share in this good work. These churches are held up as a shining example of what redeemed souls can do when controlled by the Divine Spirit. Here men and women sought out opportunities for doing what they knew would be pleasing to God. Paul was agreeably disappointed in them. Their condition was such that he did not dare to expect much from them. Their gifts far surpassed his hopes. The explanation is added, "They first gave their own selves to the Lord." Afterwards they gave to the apostles by the will of God.

It was not enough to tell them what the Macedonians had done; he tells them what the Lord had done. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty

might become rich." Paul constantly referred believers to their Lord. If he could base an appeal on some word of the Master or some act of His life, he was content. He tells the Corinthians how the Redeemer of mankind acted. He was rich, and yet became poor. He could say, "The foxes have their dens, and the birds of the air have their nests, but the Son of man has not whereon to lay His head." He had been on an equality with God, but He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. Here was a pattern for them. Here was an ideal such as they could find nowhere else. It was for the Corinthians to imitate the Prince of life in this and in all other respects.

III. *The three points about giving which are emphasized.* The first is *readiness*. "For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, and not according as he hath not." A year ago the Corinthians were willing to make generous contributions. The first announcement of the proposed collection was taken up eagerly. They had been stirred by the knowledge of the famine in Jerusalem. But it is obvious that no energetic measures were adopted for giving effect to their good intentions. In the lapse of time their ardour had become somewhat cool. Some were afraid that they would impoverish themselves. Paul called upon them to perform the doing of what they had contemplated, "that as there was the readiness to will, so there may be the completion also out of your ability." Generous impulses are good, but these impulses must be acted upon; otherwise they will result in injury to the soul. There is nothing worse than to be moved and melted by fervent appeals, and then to permit the feeling to evaporate without doing anything. Emotion must be transmuted into action in order to be of any value.

The second thing emphasized is *ability*. God requires one to give according as he has, not according as he has not. The Lord is not concerned with the amount we give; what He

notices is its proportion to what He has given us in trust to be used as the interests of the Kingdom require. Luke tells us that Jesus looked up and saw the rich men that were casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw a certain poor widow casting in two mites. And He said, "Of a truth I say unto you, this poor widow cast in more than they all; for all these did of their superfluity cast in unto the gifts; but she of her want did cast in all her living that she had." She had made the greater sacrifice, and the encomium of our Lord has come ringing down the ages for the encouragement of those who have little to give, but whose hearts are large and who give as they have been prospered. The Lord needs nothing from our hands. The cattle on a thousand hills are His. He could make gold and silver out of the stones of the field, if it were only money He needed. But He wants the love and the grateful offerings of His children.

The third thing is *equality*. The apostle did not wish that the saints in Jerusalem should be eased and those in Corinth distressed. What he did wish was reciprocity; "your abundance being at this time a supply for their want, and their abundance also may be a supply for your want." Some time in the future their conditions might be reversed. Then it would be for the Jerusalem Christians to make a contribution for the poor saints in Corinth. Paul was no anarchist or revolutionist or leveller. He was an advocate of such equality as could be produced by the sentiment of fraternity in the hearts of all believers. He refers to the experience of the people in the desert. Enough manna fell for all. The little that some could gather was ample. The great store that others gathered did no more than suffice. With equality now every soul alive could hear the gospel of God's grace. If all who have been blessed in basket and in store would give as they would wish to receive, there would be no lack anywhere. On the contrary, there would be a superabundance for all.

IV. *The nature of the giving desired.* First, it is to be

liberal or bountiful. God does not dictate how much any one shall give. His wish is that we shall give till our giving can be properly called bountifulness. One may give a penny a week and do that. And one may give ten thousand dollars a week and fall short. There are teachers and ministers and washerwomen and mechanics and others who give bountifully, and the Lord takes note and pours His blessings in full tides into their souls. A woman with an income of $1,000 a year lived comfortably on two hundred and gave eight hundred to the Lord's work. Some one commented on her large gifts. She said, "Suppose I lived on eight hundred and gave only two, how could I meet my Lord in judgment?" A young man of marvellous gifts consecrated himself and his all to the Redeemer. Speaking to others he said, "Let us be real in our talk. We say the Lord gave. What did He give? Was it His leavings? Was it that which cost Him nothing? He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have eternal life." If we wish to give bountifully we must adopt a new standard. We must give on a scale that we can rightfully say is Godlike. As long as the Christian people of America give only thirty-two cents each in a year for foreign missions we can hardly make that claim.

"'What can I spare?' we say;
'Ah! this and this
From mine array
I am not like to miss;
And here crumbs to feed some hungry one;
They do but grow a cumbrance on my shelf.'
And yet one reads, 'Our Father gave His Son,
Our Master gave Himself.'"

Secondly, it is to be *deliberate.* "Each one as he has purposed in his heart, so let him give." Paul would have the Corinthians act as intelligent and responsible beings. He would have them consider the needs of their brethren and their

own ability to supply those needs, and to act in view of these considerations. Usually men wait to be begged, urged, entreated. Special days are set aside for special efforts to open hearts and purses. Eloquent speakers are engaged for the purpose. The entire system of raising money proceeds on the assumption that Christian people do not purpose in their hearts what they can do and do it. If they are pleased with the solicitor and if every other condition is favourable they may do their part. Franklin went to hear Whitefield preach a charity sermon. He resolved before entering the church that he would not give anything. As the great preacher went on in the unfolding of his theme Franklin relented and said he would give what copper coins he had in his pocket. A little later he was moved still more and he resolved he would give what silver he had with him in addition to the copper. Whitefield closed in a burst of eloquence that swept away all thought of withholding anything, and when the plates were passed Franklin emptied his pockets, giving copper and silver and gold in one offering. It is because so many do not purpose in their hearts what they can and should do that their giving is so spasmodic and intermittent. One year they give; the next year they give nothing. The needs are greater the second year than they were the first. But the appeal was not so eloquent, or the conditions were not so favourable. Christian men and women should decide in the fear of God what they can give and give it. They should do this whether there is an appeal or not, whether the day is bright or dark. God's mercies are new every morning and fresh every evening. He opens His hands and supplies the wants of every living thing. He does not wait to be entreated and urged. His thoughts concerning us are thoughts of good and not of evil. What is true of Him should be true of all His children.

Thirdly, giving should be *cheerful.* There is a kind of eloquence that forces men to give. They are hypnotized. They give because they have lost self-control. The next day

they lament what they have done and would gladly recall their gifts if they could. Not being able to do that they determine not to be caught in that trap again. Their giving may be on a large scale, but it is not cheerful. God has no pleasure in any offering that is made grudgingly or from compulsion. If we grieve when we give and mourn because we cannot keep it for our own use; if we give from necessity, because of our position, or because of the usages of society, or the comments of our neighbours, our names and pictures may be published, but God is not honoured or pleased. A farmer was asked how much milk a certain cow gave. He said, "She gives nothing voluntarily, but if a strong man can get her into a corner where she can neither hook nor kick, she will give eleven quarts." That is the way some Christians give. They give their money as reluctantly as they part with their teeth or their life blood. They regard an appeal as some do the payment of taxes or toll on a road. It is something to be evaded if at all possible. If the day for the missionary offering is stormy or even threatening they make it a point to remain away. If there is no minister present they do the same. The day for the offering should be a high day. It should be the best day in the year. It should be as full of delight as Christmas or Easter. The auditorium should be decorated with flags and flowers. Giving should be regarded as a privilege. It should be a passion, an exhilaration, a joy. So deeply was the apostle concerned about this matter that he would not issue a command. Christian bounty is not a fit subject for command; its charm lies in its spontaneity. The value of a gift in God's sight depends upon the goodwill of the giver. Paul wished that the giving of the Corinthians should be a matter of bounty, and not of extortion.

Fourthly, it should be *speedy*. The great apostle sent Titus and the brother whose praise in the gospel was spread through all the churches to Corinth to stir up the people, in order that they might be prepared. He entreated these men that they

would go before and make up beforehand the afore-promised bounty. The word before is used three times in this connection. If messengers had to be sent out to make collections after Paul's arrival, his departure would be delayed and there would be much needless suffering. There is a proverb to the effect that he that gives promptly gives twice. That was the way Paul wished the Corinthians to give. That is the way God gives. "Before they call I will hear, and while they are yet speaking I will answer." Giving that is joyful is almost certain to be speedy. It is the giving that is reluctant that is deferred as long as possible.

V. *The motives enumerated.* First, he asks them *to maintain their reputation.* He had been glorying on their behalf to them of Macedonia. He had been telling them that Achaia had been prepared for a year. The zeal of those in Achaia had stirred up very many in Macedonia. He was unwilling that his glorying on their behalf should be made void. He felt that if some of the Macedonian brethren should accompany him to Corinth and should find that the offering was not ready he and the Corinthians would be put to shame; he for his false confidence, and they for their unreadiness. He was anxious that the wealthy church in Corinth should not fall behind the poor churches in Macedonia. He appeals to their pride. This was not the highest motive, but it was a motive, and not a bad one. As long as men are as they are all good motives may be properly employed. Those who begin under the impulse of a motive lower than the highest may in course of time come to be actuated by the very highest. It has been well said that, "a good cause, too, has a wonderful power of its own when men attend to it; it asserts itself, and takes possession of souls on its own account. Rivalry becomes generous then, even if it remains; it is a race in love that is being run, and all who run obtain the prize."

Secondly, giving to help of the Lord's work is an *investment.* The giver gains and does not lose. Giving is like sowing seed.

The harvest will be according to the sowing. He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. If the returns are small it is because the investment is small. There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet and it tendeth to poverty. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, running over, shall they give into your bosom." God honours those that honour Him. "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and it shall be paid him again." This is the promise of love, and it cannot fail. If we regard the security as sufficient we know how to proceed.

Thirdly, the giving set forth here is *pleasing to God.* He loves the cheerful giver. If we give as He has prospered us He will give us a practical demonstration of His love. We read, "And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work; as it is written, 'He hath scattered abroad, He hath given to the poor, His righteousness abideth forever.' And he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; ye being enriched in everything unto all liberality, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God." This is the way the inspired apostle speaks of giving that is in the right spirit and on a worthy scale. He will give us in return far more than we give to Him. He will so love and bless those who give as they are able that they shall be able to give more and to enjoy more. William Colgate began to give a tenth of all his earnings to the Lord. God blessed him and prospered him in his business. After some years he gave two-tenths, and then three-tenths, and then a half, and then nine-tenths, and then his entire income. Like Bunyan's man, the more he gave away, the more he had. Timothy Coop was asked how he could afford to give so much. He said, "I shovel out, and the Lord shovels in; and the Lord

has a larger shovel than I have." His answer was worthy of a great and illuminated soul. God deals on a magnificent scale with those He loves. He is able to enrich us unto all bountifulness. We have such expressions as, "all grace," "all sufficiency," "all good." Our Lord said, "It is more blessed to give than it is to receive." The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that waters others shall be watered himself. When the Lord delights in us He makes all things work together for our good. His loving favour is better than life.

Fourthly, *good is done to the recipients.* "The ministration of this service filled up the measure of the wants of the saints." The hungry would be fed. The sick would be cared for. The dying would be relieved. All who were in distress because of the famine would be helped. In blessing others they would be blessed. With what measure they meted out to others it would be meted to them again. Lord Roseberry says that the principal advantage in having wealth is that it enables its possessor to help those who are in need. It is in sharing and not in hoarding that joy is found. It does not take much to supply our real needs. The limit in eating and dressing is soon reached. One can eat and wear only so much. Any excess results in injury and not in increased efficiency or satisfaction. A man who undertook to support a missionary said he found in that the greatest joy of his life. The people who heard the gospel through his generosity were enlightened and redeemed, and his own soul was enlarged and ennobled.

Fifthly, *God is glorified.* The saints in Jerusalem would in consequence of the proved sincerity of the Corinthians give thanks to God for their single-hearted generosity. Their gratitude would overflow as it were in the form of thanksgiving to God. Instead of murmuring on account of their suffering they would praise and bless His name. In addition to that, they would glorify God, not only for the liberal contributions of the Christians in Corinth, but also for their acceptance of the gospel of Christ. The recipients of this bounty would recognize

more fully and more unreservedly the Christian standing of their Gentile brethren. They had serious doubts on this score. They had heard evil reports about Paul and about the character of His work. The money sent would overcome prejudice and antipathy and would create a bond of love with men of a different race. The distrust and contempt that had been cherished heretofore would be done away. Jew and Gentile would recognize their oneness in Christ. More than that; the Jerusalem saints would pray to God on their behalf and would long to see them. Nothing is more natural than for those who have been helped in the day of their need to intercede for those who have assisted them. Their thought is, "Jehovah bless you and keep you; Jehovah make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; Jehovah lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

Paul closes the discussion of this topic with this outburst of gratitude, "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." The unspeakable gift was Jesus Christ His Son. This one gift includes all others. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have eternal life. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things? It becomes those who claim to have been bought with the precious blood of Christ and to be filled with the Holy Spirit to give amply and joyfully, even as God Himself has given. This glimpse into the heart of God should shame all selfishness and littleness. It should cause His people to offer willingly in the day of His power. "Be ye imitators of God, as beloved children."

VI. *Some thoughts suggested by this study.* First, *giving is a religious act.* It is spoken of in the Greek as a "liturgy." Elsewhere the same writer speaks of a gift of money as an

"odour of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." What is done to the least of Christ's brethren is done to Him. Lowell represents the Master as saying,

> "Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
> Himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me."

In this passage the religious side is emphasized no less than the humanitarian. The collection for the poor saints would relieve suffering in Jerusalem, and it would at the same time honour God. Giving money for the Lord's cause is as religious as praying or preaching or coming to the communion table. In ancient times the Lord's tithe was withheld. The people thought He would not notice or care. But He did notice; He did care. He told them that in withholding the tithe they were robbing Him. He commanded them to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there might be meat in His house, and prove Him herewith, if He would not open the windows of heaven and pour them out a blessing, that there would not be room to receive it.

Secondly, *giving is a proof of the life of God in the soul.* The apostle called upon the Corinthians to show by their gifts the proof of their love. The generous man convinces all men of the reality and sincerity of his professions. Men understand such a test as that. Words are cheap. Men listen and are unmoved. But spontaneous and joyful giving staggers them. They have no answer to Christlike conduct. Such giving is among the very best evidences of Christianity. Here is evidence of which all can judge. The cheerful and liberal giver exerts a wider and more powerful influence than we often suspect. The man who gives as he is able causes those about him to glorify God. Some will follow in his steps because they are convinced that he has been born of God and knows God. When the church is bountiful in its giving it is patent that a work of sovereign grace has been wrought. Even the indifferent and profane praise God for such an exhibition.

Earnest souls are repelled by illiberality in those who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ. They regard all such with aversion and contempt.

Our giving will be measured by the life of God in us, and the essence of that life is love. If all Christians were filled up unto all the fullness of God there would be money enough for all purposes and more than enough. Dr. A. J. Gordon was one of the most successful missionary advocates of his time. He preached for a church that was not rich. Only two or three of the members were rich, and they gave but little. One offering amounted to twenty thousand dollars. In five years that church gave eighty-five thousand dollars for work outside itself. His constant endeavour was to get the members into closer fellowship with Christ. Once he said, "I am tempted never to beg a cent for God again, but, rather, to spend my energy in getting Christians spiritualized, assured that then they will be liberalized." And again, "Experts in such matters say that a bottle of wine that cannot throw its own cork is rarely good for much. Certainly a Christian's prayers and gifts and testimonies are of little value if they do not come forth of the effervescence of strong spiritual joy. For one, I am tired of the corkscrew to draw out of Christians the offerings and prayers and services which, to be of real value, should be spontaneous. I shall continue to pray and persuade and plead, but I shall not beg you to do your duty. 'My people shall be willing in the day of My power, says the Lord.'" Before the day for the offering for missions a week was spent in prayer and praise. In that atmosphere the offerings were made. The people gave largely and jubilantly, and praised the Lord for what He had put into their hearts and power to do.

Thirdly, *it is a Christlike thing to lead others to give.* Paul refers to Titus and gives thanks to God for putting the same earnest care for the Corinthians into his heart. Titus travelled among the churches in the matter of this grace and

urged them to have their offering ready, before the arrival of the apostle and his companions. To stimulate beneficence is one of the highest ministries on earth. No one can do another a greater service than to take him out of himself and inspire him with a genuine concern for the welfare of others. "It is not he who gives me a good thing, but he who stimulates me to do a good thing, who is my greatest benefactor." There is no nobler office than this; there is none more fruitful. For this reason no one should seek to avoid one who seeks to do him good by enlarging his soul. He is a friend and not an enemy. It is not to our credit that a solicitor for a worthy case is not always an acceptable visitor. Paul spoke of Titus and his associate as "the messengers of the churches, as the glory of Christ."

Fourthly, *this grace is one that calls for special cultivation.* "But as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." Paul had a great soul. He did great things in a great way. He wished all believers to do the same. He sounds the notes of abundance and superabundance. Nothing less would be worthy of their high calling, and worthy of Him who bought them with His own blood. They had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They were intelligent and eloquent. They were noted for their zeal and affection. As they abounded in these graces, they were urged to abound in the grace of liberality also. Like all other graces this one is developed by exercise. The more we give the more we feel able to give and the more we do give.

Small giving is the curse and shame of our day. It is not that we need more money in our purses, but that we need more of the grace of God in our hearts. Christian people are not giving as much now, all things considered, as they did fifty years ago. Never was there greater need of emphasizing the words, "Take heed and beware of covetousness." People are in haste to be rich. They are money mad. As a result

they fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. Robertson says riches shut up the soul. He says, "No man fears riches, yet it is a fact, generally, that a man's liberality does not increase in proportion as he grows rich. It is exactly the reverse. He extends his desires. Luxuries become necessities. He must move in another sphere, keep more servants, and take a larger house. And so in the end he gives proportionately less than he did before." Some years ago it was discovered that the aristocracy of England gave six thousand dollars a year for missions. The rest of the people of England gave several millions. The most splendid aristocracy in the world gave a pittance; the work was carried on by the gifts of those of humbler rank and smaller possessions. Let it be known and remembered that covetousness may exist where there is little or no riches. What is needed is that we resist its debasing influence. The surest way to do that, perhaps the only way, is to maintain the habit of generous and joyful giving. With God's help this can be done; for with God all things are possible. As we abound in the other graces of the divine life, we should see to it that we abound in the grace of giving also. By doing this we shall help Christ save the world and in doing this we shall save our own souls. So shall we honour Him who loved us and gave Himself up on the cross for our redemption.

XVI

"IN THE MATTER OF GIVING AND RECEIVING"

PHIL. 4 : 10–19.

THE Philippians did the giving; Paul did the receiving. While he was with them they ministered to his need. When he left them to carry on missionary work in the regions beyond they followed him with substantial tokens of their loving interest in him and in his work. He adds that "even in Thessalonica" they sent once and again to his need. For a time indeed he received nothing from them; but this was not owing to any fault of theirs. They did take thought of him, but they lacked opportunity of communicating with him. Now their thought of him revived, as trees revive when the winter is over, and they found a suitable messenger in the person of Epaphroditus, Paul's fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and their servant. By his hands they sent gifts which relieved his necessities and refreshed his spirit. Their action in this matter was the more noteworthy and honourable because no other church did so. The fact that it was fashionable to let the great apostle shift for himself did not affect the believers in Philippi. They acted without regard to the older and richer churches.

Paul was chosen of God to bear the name of Christ before kings and pagan nations and before the people of Israel. It was his high privilege to be a witness and a worker for his Lord. Paul was the greatest man of his age and the greatest man of all time. Martineau speaks of him as the travelled ambassador of Christ, who snatched Christianity from the hands of a local faction and made it a universal faith, whose powerful word

shook all the gods from Cyprus to Gibraltar, who turned the tide of history and thought, giving us the organization of Christendom for the legions of Rome, and for Zeno and Epicurus, Augustine, Eckhart and Luther. Fairbairn speaks of Paul as a foremost king of men, reigning by his imperishable words, clearest interpreter of the deepest mysteries of being, shaping noblest spirits to noblest uses, forming the men that lead the nations, making the men that make the thought and the faith and the freedom of the world. In his own time he was spoken of as one of the men that had turned the world upside down. In labour he was more abundant than all the other apostles combined.

The Philippians had none of Paul's genius. They could not preach with his eloquence. They could not help him in writing those immortal documents, the Epistles to the Romans, to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians. They could not advise him how to proceed in entering new territory and how to prosecute the work to which he had been called by the Spirit of God. But they could and did contribute to his material and moral support. They relieved him to some extent of labouring with his hands to supply his own needs, and thus placed him in a better position for carrying on his evangelistic campaigns.

In Corinth and in Thessalonica Paul wrought at his trade and would eat no man's bread for nought, but in labour and travail, he worked day and night, that he might not be a burden to any. He had a right to a support. "For even so hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel." But he did not use his right to the full, that he might preach the gospel in those cities without charge. He waived his right that he might give the Judaizers no ground for accusing him of covetousness. His relations with the Philippians were more intimate and confidential. He could accept their gifts without subjecting himself to criticism or creating the impression that he was more concerned about

their money than he was about the salvation of their souls. For this reason the gifts they sent were gladly and gratefully received.

Paul could travel and preach and establish churches. God had given him a great intellect and a great soul. He endowed him with the rare and wondrous gift of eloquence. Paul was educated in all the learning of his race. Great and effectual doors were opened before him. As long as his wants were supplied he travelled and preached the unsearchable riches of Christ. He did not care for dainties and luxuries. He was a soldier and he cared for only that which was necessary. It was only when supplies failed that he worked at his trade as a tent-maker. Like Agassiz, Paul had no time to make money; he had a greater work to do. The Philippians did not have the same gifts or the same opportunities. They worked with their hands and gave to the extent of their power, yea, and beyond their power. He did what he was best qualified to do, and they did what they were best qualified to do. The Lord's cause was greatly advantaged by this division of labour.

Gifted, as he was, and called of God as he was, and with such openings on all sides, Paul's feeling was this, "Woe is unto me if I do not preach the gospel." That was the special work the Lord wanted him to do. He was the one man living best fitted to do it. If he should undertake to make money when the Lord called him to serve as a missionary, the triumph of the gospel would be arrested. No other living man could do his work. The Philippians could make money and aid in that way. It may be that their feeling was this, "Woe is unto us if we do not do so." The will of God for them was that they should aid according to their ability and privilege. They were not their own, they had been bought with a price. They were under as much obligation as was Paul to do all in their power towards the evangelization of the world. If they failed in this they would not be able to say that they were free from the blood of all men. The record

shows that Paul was sustained in his work by their generous and gracious assistance. He spoke in Athens, the intellectual centre of the world; in Rome, the governmental centre; in Ephesus and Corinth and other cities, with greater freedom and power because he partook of their bounty. Apart from them his great work could not have been done as it was done; his noble life could not have been lived as it was lived; he could not have attained the measure of perfection to which he did attain. If they had failed in their duty, it may be that he would have fainted and fallen and died.

The apostle commended them because they had fellowship with him in his service and in his affliction. The Philippians did not say to him, "Be you warmed and filled, and the blessings of the Lord be upon you," while they clung to their money. Had they done so he would have been hindered in his work, and the Lord would have been grieved. They partook of the priceless spiritual gifts which he had bestowed upon them, and it was only fitting that he should now partake of their temporal things. They were his children in the faith; they owed him their own souls; it was proper that from time to time they should send him the things that he needed for his welfare and efficiency. While he commended them so cordially for what they had done he wished them to know that with him "gratitude was not a lively sense of favours yet to be received." He tells them that he has all he needs. "I have all things, and abound; I am filled." He repeats this thought three times for the sake of clearness and emphasis. He wished them to know how he felt. He was concerned on their account and not on his own. He did not wish anything for himself; he did wish interest to accumulate to their credit.

The relation that existed between this church and the great missionary to the nations is the relation that should exist between the churches of Christ everywhere and the missionaries in the service now. The churches should do the giving; the missionaries on the field should do the receiving. Thus both

would be blessed and God would be honoured and His Kingdom would be advanced in the world. The missionaries have gone out at the call of God and at the call of their brethren. It is contrary to the will of God that they should support themselves. They should give themselves constantly to prayer and to the ministry of the word. Those who are called to remain at home are to have a full share in the work. They are to manifest the same degree of consecration and make as great sacrifices as they expect in those who are at the front. Every Christian who is not a receiver should be a giver. God's intention is that every believer should be in one class or the other. Every redeemed soul is to have fellowship with Christ and the chosen servants of Christ in the defense and propagation of the gospel.

Let no one think that giving for the Lord's work is a matter of small consequence. It is far otherwise. One who works hard and economizes and gives to the extent of his ability, may do as much for the spread and triumph of the truth as one who goes out as a missionary. He may manifest as much faith and devotion. In any event, his reward will be sure and it will be great. In ancient times the statute said, "As is his share that goeth down to battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the stuff; they shall share alike." The will of God is that those who give and those who receive shall rejoice together. The bountiful and cheerful givers in Philippi were told that their offerings were an odour of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. They were told also that God would supply every need of theirs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. It was in this way that the Most High would deal with those who contributed to the need of His servant while he was acting as a foreign missionary. What He did then He will do now; for with Him there is no variableness or shadow that is cast by turning.

XVII

FELLOWSHIP IN FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL

I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplications with joy, for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ; even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace. —PHIL. 1 : 3–7.

PAUL told the Philippians that he thanked God upon all his remembrance of them from their fellowship in furtherance of the gospel. He refers to their coöperation in the widest sense, in sympathy, in suffering, in active labour, or in any other way. At the same time their liberal giving of money was a signal instance of their coöperation, and appears to have been foremost in his mind. In this respect their coöperation began in what he calls "the beginning of the gospel, when he departed from Macedonia." Alluding to that time he said, "No church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only; for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need."

This fellowship in the furtherance of the gospel continued "from the first day until now"; a period of about ten years. He had just received the gifts which they had sent by the hand of Epaphroditus. Their interest in the gospel and its illustrious representative was profound and permanent. It was not

like the prophet's gourd that sprang up in a night and perished in a night. It persisted in spite of trials and losses. The apostle's absence did not diminish their ardour. From the very beginning they made the cause of Christ their own. They embarked in it heart and soul. They gave of their substance to the extent of their power, yea, and beyond their power. They gave their ownselves first to the Lord, and afterwards they gave their service and their money for the advancement of the interests of His Kingdom. The apostle tells them that in his bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel they were partakers with Him of the grace of God. Their sympathy and loving thoughtfulness cheered and charmed him while a prisoner in Rome. Their supplications to God on his behalf and their generous contributions helped him mightily as he sought to answer objections and to remove obstacles and prejudices, and nerved him for the successful advocacy and propagation of the gospel. Paul was a flaming torch. He was an incarnation of the missionary passion. He went everywhere speaking good words for the Lord Jesus. But behind him and reinforcing him was the whole Philippian church. Because of its moral and material support he did not bate a jot of heart or hope in the presence of manifold persecutions and difficulties, but still bore up and pressed right onward. As he went from continent to continent and from city to city preaching Christ to Greeks and Barbarians, to the wise and to the foolish; as he sought to win the members of the Pretorian Guard to the faith as they were chained to him in turn; as he bore witness to all who resorted to him in his own hired house and to the saints in Cæsar's household; he was sustained by what they had done and were doing for him. The least of them could and did support him in his abundant labours and sufferings. Grace had been given him to labour and to endure; the same grace had been given them.

The one great object of Paul's life was that Christ might be

magnified, whether by his life or by his death. He was possessed absolutely with a sense of the worthiness of the gospel of Christ to be preached everywhere. He felt this for himself with all the power of his great intellect and great soul, and he rejoiced and gave thanks to God when he saw a church showing the same devoted spirit, and showing this by cleaving to him through all the vicissitudes of his work, and following him everywhere with their sympathy and prayer. Other churches were occupied with themselves and their own little and local affairs. Their zeal was as transient as the early cloud and as the morning dew. The Galatians were warmly attached to the apostle and to the gospel he preached for a season. He says that if it had been possible they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him. In a short time he lamented that they were so soon removing from him to another gospel. They came to regard him almost as an enemy. It was necessary for the apostle to vindicate himself from the attacks that were made on him. It was not so in Philippi. The believers there understood him; they possessed his spirit; they partook of his boundless enthusiasm; they had a share in all that affected the gospel and him as its advocate and champion.

Paul speaks of "being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work will perfect it until the day of Christ." By this good work he means the implantation of the missionary spirit. It was that spirit that led to the consecration of themselves, their souls and their bodies and substance to the evangelization of the world. As the first-fruits of the European mission the church in Philippi entered most heartily into all Paul's purposes and plans and did what it could to strengthen his heart and his hands. The cordial coöperation of the entire membership convinced the apostle that God was in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. He knew that Christian people may support the missionary enterprise as a substitute for the inward life, or out of sectarian competition, or for some other unworthy motive, but such support does not last long. But when

their interest in promoting the gospel continues for a long period, notwithstanding opposition and persecution, it must be because their lives are hid with Christ in God. So sincere and so earnest were the Christians in Philippi that Paul was confident that they would stand fast till the day of Christ's advent. He who inaugurated the good work would complete the same.

The apostle was grateful, not for what the church had done for him as an individual Christian, but for what it had done for him while labouring for the spread and triumph of the gospel. For himself he says he had learned in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content. In everything and in all things he had learned the secret, both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. Nevertheless he tells them that they did well to have fellowship with him in his affliction. Lightfoot says it was not the actual pecuniary relief, so much as the sympathy and companionship in his sorrow, that the apostle valued. He did not compliment them as he did with a view to securing further gifts; he disclaims any such intention. He did not want a "gift"; he did want "fruit that might increase to their account." It was for their sake and not for his own that he spoke as he did. He assures them that the gift sent him was an odour of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

It was for such a church that the great apostle to the Gentiles gave thanks to God continually. This was a mission church and a missionary church. In response to the call of the man of Macedonia Paul crossed over from Troas to Philippi. The church was no sooner established than it began to help give the gospel to the cities and countries adjacent. The apostle says that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. Paul was thankful for what they had done and for what he knew they would do. Their history justified his confidence in them for the future. They were his children in the faith and he had boundless confidence in them and boundless love for

them. He speaks of them as his "joy and crown, his dearly beloved and eagerly desired." God was his witness how he yearned after them all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus. He was proud of this church and grateful for its record and for its future sacrifices and services.

The church in Philippi was held up before other churches to provoke them to do far more than they had been doing. It can be held up before churches to-day for the same purpose. For what the Holy Spirit approved in the first century He will approve in the twentieth. Every church that would have His approval and blessing now must have fellowship with other churches and with the Founder of the church in the furtherance of the gospel. Its ambition should be to be and to be known as a missionary church. That is a worthier ambition than to be known as the church with the costliest building, or the most eloquent minister, or the largest organ, or the best choir, or the largest and richest membership. The church exists to help Christ seek and save the lost; this is its sole and its supreme business. The entire membership of the church in Philippi was enlisted. Paul says, "Ye are all partakers with me of grace." The gifts were not made and the burdens borne by a few. The same should be true of every church on earth to-day. Every member should be enrolled as a contributor. The youngest and the poorest member, as well as the oldest and richest, and all between these extremes, should aid according to the ability that God has given. Every soul that intelligently and honestly accepts Jesus as Lord should be willing and eager to do what is in his power, that they may see to whom no tidings of Him came, and they that have not heard may understand. The missionary spirit is an indubitable proof of the life of God in the soul. The absence of it is positive proof that the gospel has been received only nominally. The Philippian church did not make one generous offering and then sit down contented, feeling that it had done its full duty. There was nothing spasmodic or sporadic about its giving. It

began at "the first day" and continued till the time the apostle wrote. Moreover he felt assured that they were going to keep right on for all time to come. That was as it should be now. The habit of giving should be formed, so that the offerings may be as confidently expected as the coming of the seasons. Now as then the church needs to do this for its own sake, no less than for the sake of the world that lies in the wicked one. The church is saved from selfishness and from provincialism and from worldliness and from a thousand other evils by its devotion to the cause of world-wide evangelism. God will honour the church that honours Him by doing its duty; He cannot honour and prosper the church that does not. It is true to-day as it was when Paul wrote that money given for the gospel's sake is an odour of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

If all our churches were like the church in Philippi we could take the world for Christ in a generation. For every such church among us those who are responsible for the management and maintenance of our missionary societies thank God upon all remembrance of it.

XVIII

"MAKE ME A LITTLE CAKE FIRST"

But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; but unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. —Luke 4. 25, 26. Compare 1 Kings 17 : 8–16.

IN the time of famine Elijah was told to go to Zarephath, for the Lord had commanded a widow there to sustain him. Coming to the gate of the city he saw the widow gathering sticks, and said to her, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." As she went to fetch the water he said, "Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand." The widow replied, "As Jehovah, thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse; and behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die." Elijah said, "Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and afterwards make for thee and for thy son." This demand may wear a harsh and selfish aspect; but it was not that. The prophet of the Lord sought to test and to develop her faith. He added, "For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, The jar of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth." The widow believed God and obeyed the will of His servant, and she, and he, and her house, did eat many

days. The jar of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of Jehovah, which He spoke by Elijah.

The thought in this story that needs emphasis is found in the words, "Make me thereof a little cake first." There is an axiom to the effect that self-preservation is the first law of nature. That may be true; but if so the question arises, "What method shall be employed in preserving ourselves?" Our Lord taught us not to be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" God knows that we have need of all these things. If we seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us. By complying with the prophet's command the widow saved her own life and that of her household, and secured the blessing of God. Had she and her son eaten their morsel alone they would have perished in the famine.

There is a lesson here for the individual Christian. A child of God is not to put his own claims first; he is to recognize the priority of God's claims. God is not a beggar asking alms or the crumbs that fall from our tables. He is a preferred creditor. We are stewards of His manifold grace. What we have we hold in trust for Him. We cannot honestly use trust funds to gratify the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, while we give our leavings to assist His work in the world. We are living in a period of unprecedented prosperity. We are in graver peril than were the people in the prophetic age from "pride, and fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness." What were considered luxuries a few decades ago are necessaries now. More than ever before is there need of extraordinary stress being laid on God's claims, because they are anterior to all claims of fashion and society and appetite and vanity. They are of superlative importance. Mrs. Bishop has well said that our scale of living is constantly rising. "We decorate our lives till farther decoration be-

comes impossible. Our expenditures upon ourselves are enormous." We are not any more comfortable or any better off on account of our extravagance and riotous living than we were before. As a matter of fact, we are not so comfortable or so well off. With the clamorous demands of self and the world the call of God for His rightful share first is apt to be ignored or forgotten, or all manner of ingenious excuses are invented to silence the reproaches of enlightened consciences.

There is a lesson here for the churches. Many congregations feel that they must have elegant buildings, and elaborate furnishings; they must have rich frescoes and pipe organs and costly music. When they have provided themselves with all that they need to eclipse and outshine their neighbours, and have had a good long breathing spell, then they may do something to give the gospel to those who are living and dying without God and without hope. That is a reversal of the divine order. God's law is, "Make me thereof a little cake first." The apostles evangelized the Roman empire without a choir or a pipe organ or even a church building. The great commission was given to eleven men who had no money and no credit and no social position. These men put the Lord's work first, and because they did they were able to "kindle the fires of the faith that burned down to the water's edge all around the Mediterranean and remade the Roman world." It is well to have convenient and comfortable houses of worship and such other facilities as the people of God need to serve God acceptably. But every dollar spent in a vain show is a dollar of trust funds misappropriated. In one of our cities there is a negro church that meets for worship in the basement of a building belonging to other people. That church supports a missionary on the foreign field. That church has made a little cake first for the Lord, and to that church He will say, "I was hungry and ye fed Me."

The world will never be won to Christ by gifts from our pin-money. The missionary enterprise is belittled and put on

a wrong basis when Christian people are asked to save a nickel or a dime from their cigars or from their chewing gum or some other luxury. The Lord's work is, or should be, our first concern, and it should be provided for first. After we have done that we can minister to our own needs. Our Lord did not give that which did not cost Him anything. Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich. He gave Himself. The servant is not greater than his Lord; the pupil is not above his Teacher. Plain living and high thinking and large giving should characterize the followers of Him who said, "The foxes have their dens, and the birds of the air have their nests; but the Son of Man has not whereon to lay His head." If we believe this we can easily see that luxury and magnificence and elegance, while the world is perishing, in its need and God's work languishes, are out of place. In a public address a speaker intended to speak of the "embellishments of human life." By a slip of the tongue he called them "embezzlements." He spoke more wisely than he intended. Our Lord says, "Seek first the interests of the kingdom"; "Make Me a little cake first." He does not ask for the broken fragments that remain after we have eaten to satiety; He does not ask for our cheese parings and pork rinds. We have no authority for putting that last which He puts first, or treating that as least which in His estimation is greatest.

The evangelization of the world is delayed because Christian people put the emphasis in the wrong place. We spread a banquet for ourselves. We fill ourselves up to the throat with all that we desire. We gratify every appetite and every taste and give to carry on the Lord's work what we never miss and never feel. All the believers in the United States give eight millions a year for world-wide missions. This is a paltry amount for the richest body of people on the globe to give for the greatest work on earth. There are single individuals who could give the whole amount and not know it. Because the primacy of

God's claims is not recognized, we do not honour Him with our substance and with the first-fruits of all our increase.

The widow of Zarephath did as she was told, and she never lacked. Is not this the teaching of the Word of God everywhere? If we will honour Him, He will honour us. When a little band puts God's claims first and meets in an upper room or in a parlour or in a shop, its success is relatively greater and its joy completer than when it has every comfort and every convenience, and lacks the consecration and self-sacrifice of the earlier times and the simpler equipment. In many a cathedral with all its appliances, there are few conversions and little spiritual joy. The worshippers attend on Sunday morning, and suffer an artistic performance. But the hunger of the soul is unfed and its thirst is unslaked. In earlier days, when the claims of Christ were given their rightful place, they said, "This is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven."

There are those who make the Lord's cake first. One of the greatest religious leaders of modern times was asked to make a return of his plate to the government. He said he had four silver spoons, and that he would buy no more while so many around him were in need of bread. An illustrious Christian soldier gave his fortune and melted down his medals and gave the gold. A man with an income of $10,000 lived on $1,000, and gave the remainder. A teacher lives on half her salary and supports a substitute with the other half. Suppose all did so, the kingdom of God would come in a day.

When Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven, Elisha took up the mantle that fell from him, and, standing by the bank of the Jordan, smote its waters, and said, "Where is Jehovah, the God of Elijah?" He wanted the God that protected and provided for and honoured Elijah to do as much for him as his successor. We do not need to ask that question. We know that God is not far from every one of us. We know that He is able and willing to increase our meal in

the jar and our oil in the cruse. He has been doing that ever since. But it has been for those who acknowledged His claim first. It would be easy to multiply instances. One typical illustration will suffice. The bishop of Llandaff gives a chapter from his own experience as follows: "I do feel very strongly that we cannot afford to do without missionary work for the good of our own souls. I believe that our own spiritual good is bound up in it, and if we neglect our duty to this, we are neglecting the first duty to the Christian Church and lowering our own ideal of the Christian life. I would just mention one little incident which happened in my former parish. We had a great many districts springing up. In one of these districts we were very anxious to build a church. There were no rich people living in the place, and the difficulty was to raise the money. We had been struggling and planning some way or other of doing this. I went to that district and proposed that we should have a missionary meeting there. I was met with the objection, 'We cannot possibly; we need all the money we can get for our new church.' It was not very encouraging; however we decided to try it. I quoted the text, 'Make me a little cake first, and then make for thyself and thy son.' The experiment was tried and we had a very successful and inspiring meeting. Strange to say, within a few weeks I got a letter from a gentleman saying he would be delighted to give us a thousand pounds towards the new church. A short time after he sent us five hundred pounds, and before long the church was built, and there is a flourishing church congregation in that very place. I do believe that this instance illustrates a great and true principle that, 'He that watereth others shall be watered also himself.'" The promise of God is this, "Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down; shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom." The promise holds if we give first.

XIX

"A GOD THAT LOVES US"

1 John 4 : 8; John 3 : 16; Jer. 31 : 3; Is. 60 : 19

THE story is told of a Hindu who had never heard of a loving God, or of Jesus the Saviour, and had never met a missionary, that in some way he got a copy of the Gospel by John. He said, "I liked the book when I read it, and my wife liked it when I read it to her. I read it to my family, and the more I read it the more I liked it. I soon saw that it was about a God who loved us, and that was a surprise to me. During all this time we continued worshipping the family idols; but one day I said to my wife, 'This Book tells us about another God different from our idols; I think we ought to pray to Him.'" The result was that they began to pray in secret, because they were afraid of their neighbours. As they continued reading and praying the idols were gradually put out of the house. Some time after this secret disciple heard singing and preaching in the market, and soon made the joyful discovery that the speaker was telling the people about the God of whom he had read in the Book. This man gave himself to the Lord and led his sons and daughters to do the same. He ceased giving money to the priests, and now gives regularly to assist the Lord's work. His light shines in the darkness around him.

"A God that loves us!" No stranger or more joyful truth was ever heard in the lands of darkness. They have ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of gods; but in all that countless host there is not one that loves or cares for human beings. Tacitus declared that the gods in-

terfered with human affairs only to punish. De Quincy tells us that there was an ancient and secret enmity between the gods and the human race. There was a sort of truce between the parties; temples and their religious services recorded this truce. But below all appearances there lay deadly enmity. The gods were mere odious facts, like scorpions or rattlesnakes, having no moral aspects whatever; public nuisances; and having no relation to men but that of capricious tyrants. All antiquity contains no hint of love on the part of the gods towards men or on the part of men towards the gods. The worshippers would gladly have exterminated the gods if they could have done so. They poured out rivers of blood and rivers of oil; they gave their first-born for their transgression, and the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul; but fear and not love was the impelling motive. They aimed at no distant prize ahead; they fled from a danger immediately behind. Pope spoke of the deities of Homer as

> "Gods changeful, partial, passionate, unjust,
> Whose attributes were rage, revenge, and lust."

Dr. March saw a shrine in India in which was a figure of a female on which were carved and painted the most horrible expressions of ferocity and cruelty. The front teeth protruded like the tusks of a wild boar. Between the teeth was the body of an infant with the head sticking out on one side and the feet on the other. The monster was biting the child in two. In the left hand of the same figure was another infant, and the right arm was uplifted with a dagger in the hand in the act of plunging the weapon into the heart of the child. Offerings were made to the goddess, and children were brought by their mothers to worship her. Kali is the embodiment of murder and cruelty. Around her waist is a girdle of bloody human hands; around her neck is a necklace of human skulls; human bodies hang by the hair from her ears; a bloody

tongue protrudes from her mouth, her face is red and bloated like a drunkard's.

We are informed by those who know that the children of India are taught to believe that the whole material world is filled with horrible monsters, hideous and malignant, and always watching to do them harm. These evil spirits haunt the trees, the fields, the fountains, the forests, the dark places of the earth and the deep places of the sea. They delight in bringing misfortunes and miseries upon men. They are ever ready to derange business, destroy property, waylay and maltreat travellers, mildew the grain, poison the fountains, bring drought and plague and famine on the land. The people believe that the gods hover about them always with the intent to inflict evil. "Incense is burned, sacrifices are made, gifts are given, lots are drawn, temples are visited, idols are gilded and crowned with garlands, priests and fortune-tellers are consulted, prayers are whirled in cylinders or floated on flagstaffs or burned on paper or mumbled in unknown tongues, to guard against the powers of evil which are supposed to beset and plague men's lives everywhere and at all times."

Hinduism has no personal god. Hinduism is pantheistic. God is everything and everything is god. He is the author of evil and of good. A man's record is written on his skull at the time of his birth. Moral responsibility is practically denied. Brahma is energy. Things are as they are from necessity and cannot be changed. The priests sprang from the head of Brahma; the soldiers from his shoulders; the farmers from his thighs and legs; and the sudras from his feet. Wherever one happens to be born there he must remain, he and his posterity for a thousand generations. No matter what his genius or character he cannot rise above the position he occupied at the time of his birth. If he is born a sweeper or a worker in leather he must follow that vocation. So it has come to pass that "hands that might have swayed the rod of empire or waked to ecstasy the living lyre" must handle the

broom or the hoe till the end of the day. No one can wear the sacred thread of the twice born unless he is a Brahmin.

In China fear is the essence of religion. There is no joy, no delight in the service of the gods. The people are afraid of some evil; they fall down and bump their heads on the ground. They fear to tap the mountains lest they should disturb the dragon that underlies and sustains all things; they fear to go out of doors after dark. If anything goes wrong in the family, if there is sickness or accident or trouble of any kind, they have priests and astrologers come to the house and stay for days or weeks feasting and incurring the expenditure of hundreds or thousands of dollars in vain ceremonies, reading, chanting formulas, burning pictured paper, cutting to the right and the left with swords, under the pretense of driving out the evil spirits that plague the family.

Confucianism is agnostic. The ancient Chinese sages spoke of Shangti, and it is possible that they thought of a personal deity. Confucius spoke of Heaven, but whether Heaven is personal or not, no one knows. Confucius never enjoined the worship of Shangti, though he did sanction the worship of spirits and of one's ancestors. He did not teach that there is a God at the heart of all things controlling all events and making them minister to the good of all His children. Confucius emphasized the relations that should exist between men here and now; he did not emphasize man's relation to God. Taoism teaches the worship of the ruler of the material universe, and the powers of nature and imaginary spirits. Shintoism is a worship of dead heroes.

Buddhism began as atheism. In one country it developed into polytheism; in another into pantheism, and in another still into dualism. Buddha would have every man depend upon himself. According to the teaching of Buddhism there is no one to hear and answer prayer; there is no one to help in time of need. Buddha was a great soul and taught many things that are beautiful and true; but Buddha had no message of

hope and salvation for men who sin and suffer and die. We hear of the gospel of Buddha, but that is a misnomer. Buddha had no gospel. Buddhism is naturally and inevitably pessimistic. Existence is an evil. Man's greatest boon is the privilege of committing suicide.

Mohammedanism is monotheistic. "There is no God but God"; this is the truth contained in the system. But God as conceived by Mohammed is solitary, severe, stern, inducing men to obey by motives that debase, degrading women, hating the infidel and handing him over to the exterminating sword. The God of Mohammed is a tremendous, unsympathizing autocrat. He delights in making all his creatures feel that they are his slaves. The attribute of God that Mohammed lays most stress upon is his almightiness. He is spoken of as being compassionate and merciful, but his mercy is exercised in the most arbitrary way. In the Koran there are ninety-nine names for God, but father is not one of them. Nothing could be more repugnant to Mohammedan thought than that God should have a son. To affirm that is the worst heresy that tongue can utter or mind hold. Sir William Muir says one may search the Koran in vain for such words as, "The Lord is not willing that any should perish," or, "That He will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth." According to Mohammedan tradition when God made man He took a lump of clay in His hands and broke it into two parts. From one part He made half the race and said, "These to hell and I care not." From the other part He made the rest of mankind and said, "These to paradise and I care not." God is represented as having created those who are lost that hell might be full. In the Koran he says, "We created man a most exalted fabric; afterwards we rendered him the vilest of the vile." Trench says one may search the Koran from beginning to the end and not find such a sentiment as we have in the Psalms, "Create in me a clean heart. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow." The

idea of holiness finds no place in the Koran. How could it since the record of its author's life is so full of blots and blood-stains? Fairbairn says that the God of the Koran is a fit deity for wild Arabs and fierce Turks, but is no God for civilized and free men.

The author of "Daybreak in the Dark Continent," states that nearly all the pagan gods are demons, and demons without any disguise to cover their hideousness. "The cruel barbarities of the pagan do not necessarily spring from an inborn brutality of nature, but from his ideas of the gods and religion." His gods are overgrown savages, revelling in drunkenness, debauchery, vicious immoralities, obscene orgies. As raving lions they go about seeking whom they may devour. Characteristic titles for the gods are, "The Hater," "The Malignant One," "The Producer of Calamities." The black natives of Australia believe in Buddai, who in the dim past engulfed mankind in a great flood, after which he assumed the rôle of a gigantic old man, who for ages has been asleep in the sand, and who at last will swallow up mankind.

Prof. W. N. Clarke holds that the crowning glory of the religion of Jesus Christ, the sum of all its glories, is its God. He is one; He is personal; He is self-existent, almighty, eternal; He is holy, wise, loving and good. Fairbairn states that the transcendent moment for man, the moment of supreme promise, and of grandest hope, was when the idea of a moral deity entered his heart, when all the energies of religion came to be moral energies for the making of moral men. "The moment when gravitation, navigation, the secrets of the sea, or the stars, or the earth, were discovered had neither singly nor all combined equal or even approximate significance for man. Take from him this religion steeped in morality, made living by the moral character of its God, and you will leave him without the grandest energy working for good and peace and progress that ever came into his history or into his heart."

We think of God as infinitely just and infinitely holy, as

loving righteousness and hating iniquity, and we think it was always so. But such is far from being the fact in the case. In ancient times there was no connection between religion and morality. The gods of Egypt, and Phenicia and Assyria and Greece and Rome were not good. Holiness was not an attribute of any one of them. They were capricious and unjust and unclean. The gods of that time and of those lands were not moral; they did not furnish in their own lives a worthy standard of conduct for the people who worshipped them. No one of them said or could say, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." An ancient moralist said, "The gods send war and pestilence, and we offer sacrifices to propitiate their wrath; but the virtuous man is sufficient for himself, and needs no help from the gods." What was true then is true now; for the gods of that time are like the gods of our day. Krishna is worshipped by two hundred millions of people; but there is no man in India as vile as Krishna.

The Old Testament calls special attention to two attributes of God, namely, His righteousness and His goodness. Abraham's conviction was that the Judge of all the earth would do right. He would not slay the righteous with the wicked. The very thought was abhorrent to the patriarch. Moses spoke of God as glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. The writers of the Old Testament delighted in the fact that God kept covenant with His people. To them He was a great God, and a great King above all gods. They said, "The Lord God is a sun and a shield; He will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." There was no caprice or injustice or favouritism in Him. He was holy in all His works and righteous in all His ways. He is everywhere represented as good and as doing good.

In the New Testament God is represented as a God of love. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." "Herein is love, not that we loved God,

but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." God is love. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. "At heart Christianity is simply a revelation of a perfect God, doing the work of perfect love and holiness for His creatures, and transforming men into His own likeness, so that they will do the work of love and holiness towards their fellows." He is the universal Father, the giver of every good gift and every perfect gift. It is in Him that we live and move and have our being. He is interested in the welfare of every child made in His image and makes all things work together for His good. "His glory is to diffuse happiness, and fill up the silent places of the universe with voices that speak out of glad hearts."

The poets are the best interpreters of God and truth. Lowell says,

> "It is they
> Who utter wisdom from the central deep,
> And, listening to the inner flow of things,
> Speak to the age out of eternity."

They see and know. Whittier confessed that he was perplexed about many things. But he was sure of one thing. So he wrote,

> "Yet in this maddening maze of things,
> And tossed by storm and flood;
> To one fixed stake my spirit clings,
> I know that God is good."

Tennyson closes his immortal poem with the lines,

> "One God that ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves."

One of Browning's convictions formed in youth and cherished all his days was this,

"That He, the Eternal, First and Last,
Who in His power, had so surpassed
All man conceives of what is might,—
Whose wisdom, too, showed infinite,
Would prove as infinitely good."

Thomson, the poet of the seasons, gave his thought in these lines,

"I cannot go
Where Universal Love smiles not around,
Sustaining all yon orbs and all their suns;
From seeming evil still educing good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression."

Christianity presents a God who is worthy of our confidence and love and service. He is the God of hope. He inspires hope in the hearts of all who put their trust in Him. He is the God of all consolation and grace. He gives beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. He is a very present help in time of trouble. He will never leave us nor forsake us. "He will feed His flock like a shepherd, He will gather the lambs in His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and will gently lead those that have their young." He is our refuge and strength. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail: but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint."

A converted Chinese in setting forth the relative merits of Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity said, "A man had fallen into a deep dark pit, and lay at its miry bottom, groaning and utterly unable to move. Confucius passing by, approached the edge of the pit, and said, 'Poor fellow, I am sorry for you; why were you such a fool as to get in there?

If you ever get out do not get in again.' The man said, 'I cannot get out.' That is Confucianism. A Buddhist priest next came by, and said, 'Poor fellow, I am pained to see you down there. I think that if you could climb up two-thirds of the way or even half, I could reach you and lift you out.' But the man was utterly helpless and unable to rise. That is Buddhism. Next the Saviour came by, and hearing his cries, went to the brink of the pit, reached down and laid hold of the man, brought him up and said, 'Go and sin no more.' That is Christianity." God in Christ takes man from the horrible pit and the miry clay, and sets his feet upon the rock, and establishes his goings, and puts a song of praise into his mouth.

The nations that sit in darkness need to know of a God that so loved them that He gave His only begotten Son for their salvation; a God that opens His hand and supplies every need of their natures; a God who has planned to bring all who love Him into His own presence, where there is fullness of joy and where there are pleasures forevermore. They need this more than any material thing; more than battleships, more than machine guns, more than electrical appliances, more than steam-plows or reapers. A God that loves them! That is what the nations most need to know. "That knowledge will lift heavy burdens from weary hearts; it will bring the light of peace into the habitations of cruelty; it will drive out the demons and spirits of evil from the homes and paths of men; it will open the vision of the dying to a land where there shall be no more sickness or pain or crying; it will lead the oppressed out into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." From the creation on God has been seeking to make His disposition known to His intelligent creatures. He has given them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. His mercies have been new every morning and fresh every evening. He revealed Himself in the person of His Son. In His earthly ministry our Lord was seek-

ing to make God known to men. He said to them that, if earthly parents who are evil know how to give good things to their children, how much more shall the heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?

Our conception of God is fundamental. It moulds our lives and it moulds our civilization. Harlan P. Beach says that every community is organized around the idea of a god of some kind. "The god governs them and gives them their ideals. In the Fiji Islands the difficulty was not so much that men were any more brutal by nature than we; it was their gods that were brutal, their ideals were cruel. A chief there roused himself with the same effort of will to slaughter human beings and crush out every particle of mercy as that with which we nerve ourselves to some high moral effort. When, as was the case with one chief, he knocked his wife on the head and killed and cooked her, it was not that it was easy; it was hard. It was the ideal of the cruel chief that he was seeking to realize. The ideal organized the community." The Mohammedan, the Hindu, the savage, the Christian, each is what he is because of this conception of deity. His creed shapes his character and his destiny.

There is nothing that challenges the attention of the non-Christian peoples as the statement that God is love and that He loves them and desires their redemption and their present and eternal well-being. There is nothing that impresses them as this does. Missionaries say that people who were disposed to shut their ears to the message and to drive them away were profoundly affected by the story of God's love and mercy and goodness. When they heard a little they were eager to hear more. The story is so unlike anything they ever heard or imagined and so pleasing in itself that they are charmed by it. It is to them like good news from a far country; like rivers of water in a dry place, like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Their gods are demons and are constantly planning and executing mischief. They are ever seeking their injury. The

people have been taught to wear charms and amulets and to resort to all kinds of devices to protect themselves. They give a boy a girl's name and dress him like a girl, so that the gods may not cause his death. They build their homes and their temples so as to keep out the spirits. When they hear of a God who loves all His children and seeks their good early and late, a God who is grieved when any do err from the truth and rejoices with joy unspeakable when they repent, a God who did deliver, who does deliver, who will deliver, a God who will bring them off conquerors and more than conquerors through Christ who loves them, they feel constrained to yield themselves to Him that He may guide and mold and possess them for evermore. A Brahmin heard Dr. Pentecost preach. On being asked if he were a Christian he said he was not, but added that his children and his grandchildren would be. Then he said to the preacher, "Sahib, I could love your God." That was in harmony with the words spoken long before, "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee."

It is the will of God that those who know Him should make Him known to those who are ignorant of Him. It is as a God who loves His children and deals with them in holy love that He wishes to be known. For it is true as Browning says,

> "A loving worm within its clod
> Is diviner than a loveless God
> Amid his worlds."

To make God as revealed in Christ adequately known is the great task assigned the church. As she undertakes this task she has for her encouragement the exceeding great and precious promise, that the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. She has also the great words of our Lord, "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.' Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto Me." This is the delightful work in which every missionary agent is engaged.

He urges all with whom he has to do to acquaint themselves with God and be at peace with Him, and assures them that so good shall come to them. This is the knowledge the nations need most; for to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent is eternal life.

XX

CHRISTIANITY TRIUMPHANT

Gen. 12 : 3 ; Ps. 2 : 8 ; Is. 42 : 4 ; Acts 19 : 20 ; Rev. 7 : 9

THE sacred writers confidently expected the universal triumph of the gospel. They did not entertain a doubt on the subject. The triumph would not be easy or immediate ; but it was as certain as that God lives and reigns and makes all things work according to the counsel of His own will. They foresaw and they foretold that the gospel would meet with opposition ; enemies would arise without and within the church ; there would be times of apostasy : but the cause is God's, and it cannot fail. All the resources of the universe are pledged to the accomplishment of His gracious and eternal purpose, the redemption of all mankind. We have this assurance to sustain and to inspire us as we labour for the world-wide conquest of the gospel of the grace of God. We are not leading a forlorn hope ; we are not engaged in an impossible enterprise ; our labour is not in vain in the Lord. I ask you to think with me—

I. *Of the teaching of Prophecy on this topic.* To Abraham it was said, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This promise referred to the coming Christ. Our Lord said, "Abraham rejoiced to see My day ; he saw it and was glad." In blessing his sons Jacob said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come ; and unto Him shall the obedience of the peoples be." Through Moses God said that all the earth should be filled with His glory. This promise was confirmed with an oath. The psalmist said, "All nations whom

Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and they shall glorify Thy name." "Yea all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." Speaking for God Isaiah said, "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." It was said of the Servant of Jehovah that He should not fail nor be discouraged till He had set justice in the earth, and that the isles should wait for His law. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." Daniel said that the God of heaven should set up a kingdom which would never be destroyed, nor should the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it should break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, and it should stand forever. Micah said that the mountain of Jehovah's house should be established on the top of the mountains; and peoples shall flow into it. And many nations shall say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths." Zechariah sang, "And He shall speak peace unto the nations: and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." Zephaniah said, "that Jehovah should famish all the gods of the earth"; "and men shall worship Him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the nations." Habakkuk said, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." Malachi said, "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith Jehovah of hosts." It was predicted that the glory of Jehovah

should be revealed, and that all flesh should see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it. These glorious prophecies will not be fulfilled till all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Our Lord said to His disciples, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all the nations; and then shall the end come." "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this also which this woman hath done shall be told for a memorial of her." He never contemplated anything less than universal dominion. The gates of Hades shall not prevail against the church which He founded. Westcott says that the true thought of this promise is that even the strongest citadel of evil shall not forever keep out the triumphant hosts of the Cross. Our Lord's last command agrees with all that had been foretold. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." On Patmos John heard great voices in heaven, and they said, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever." The redeemed as John saw them constituted a great multitude that no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues. They were arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands: and they cry with a great voice, saying, "Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb."

II. *Of the teaching of history on this topic.* On the day of Pentecost three thousand were added to the believers in Jerusalem. The Lord added to these day by day those that were saved. In a little time the number was five thousand. Soon after the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith. After the death of Herod the word of God grew

and multiplied. In Samaria the multitude gave heed with one accord to the things that were spoken by Philip. All that dwelt at Lydda and Sharon and many of those that dwelt at Joppa believed and turned to the Lord. Saul of Tarsus was among the believers. He was worth ten thousand average men, because he was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. In Antioch much people was added to the Lord. In Iconium a great multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed. In Derbe, many disciples were made. In Thessalonica some of those who heard were persuaded, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. In Berœa many believed; also of the Greek women of honourable estate, and a considerable number of men. Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. In Ephesus the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified both among Jews and Greeks. The statement follows: "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed." The Epistles say that what had been kept in silence through times eternal was made known to all the nations unto obedience of faith. It is stated that the gospel was bearing fruit in all the world, and increasing. Wherever the gospel was preached souls were won. In many cases the number of the converts was very great.

The testimony of later writers is in harmony with that of the New Testament. Tacitus speaks of the Christians as "an immense multitude." Pliny, the Proconsul of Bithynia, wrote to Trajan that many of all ages and ranks, and of both sexes, had become Christians. The movement was not confined to the cities, but had spread into the villages and into the country; the temples were deserted; and sacred rites were interrupted; and the animals for sacrifice found few purchasers. Tertullian of Carthage wrote, "Men cry that the state is besieged; that Christians are in the fields, in the forts, in the islands; they mourn as for a loss, that every sex, age, condition, and even rank are going over to this sect." The same

writer spoke of whole nations emerging from the whirlpool of error, to God their Creator, and to Christ as God. Speaking of our Lord Eusebius said, "He alone of all who ever lived is still called by the name of Christ, among all men over the world; yea confessed and witnessed to under this title, and commemorated by Greeks and Barbarians, and even to this day is honoured as a king by His followers throughout the world, admired as something greater than a prophet." He alleged that Christians were the most populous of all nations; church buildings were too small; so they had to be pulled down to make room for new and larger structures. He spoke of the church as shining throughout the world like the most brilliant constellations, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as flourishing among all the human race. Origen said that the word spoken with power had gained the mastery over men of all sorts of nature, and that it was impossible to see any race of men which had escaped accepting the testimony of Jesus. Lactantius testifies as follows: "There was no nook or corner of the earth so remote that the divine religion had not reached it, no nation so rough in life that it was not mellowing to works of righteousness by having accepted the worship of God." Porphyry affirmed that every corner of the universe had experienced the gospel, and the whole ends and bounds of the world were occupied with the gospel. Another early writer asks what spot is there upon the earth which is not held by the name of Christ? "Where the sun rises and sets, in every quarter of the globe, the glory of His honourable heavenly majesty has filled creation. And although the dying limbs of idolatry still quiver in some countries, this deadly evil is to be cut off by Christians in every land." Arnobius declared that the sacraments of this great Name are now spread all over the earth in so short a time. "No nation now is so barbarous and ignorant of mercy, that it has not been turned to modify its harsh ways, and to come over to a peaceful temper by an acceptance of peace." Lucian of Antioch held that the greater part of the

world, including whole cities, had yielded obedience to the truth. In the time of Diocletian Christian men were entrusted with the government of provinces, and were discharged from the duty of offering sacrifices. One of the emperors gave as a reason for stopping the persecutions, that he had seen that almost all men were abandoning the worship of the gods and attaching themselves to the party of the Christians.

The gospel won its triumphs, not only in all parts of the world, but in all classes of society. Paul told the Corinthians that not many wise or mighty or noble were called. The majority of the converts came from the humbler classes. But the record shows that there were some wise and influential and noble men and women among the believers. It was the common people that heard the Teacher gladly. The rulers and the Pharisees, for the most part, held aloof or opposed. Nevertheless there were some persons of property and social position among the first disciples. Thus Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews. Joseph was a member of the supreme court, and a man of wealth and power. Zaccheus was a publican and was rich. Matthew had a home of his own and made a great feast in honour of our Lord. Barnabas and Ananias were men of property. Cornelius and Sergius Paulus were Roman officials. Manaen was the foster-brother of Herod. Lydia was a seller of purple and had a considerable household. Crispus was a ruler of the synagogue. Aquila and Prisca had their own home and conducted a business of their own. Erastus was the treasurer of Corinth. Gaius was Paul's host and the host of the entire church. Philemon was a man of some note; he had a house and servants and refreshed many of the saints. Gaius to whom John wrote an Epistle and the most excellent Theophilus to whom the Gospel by Luke and The Acts were dedicated were men of mark. The converts in Ephesus had magical books worth fifty thousand pieces of silver. We read of the saints in Cæsar's household. Harnack contends that we are able to-day on the basis of fully authenticated records to

declare with satisfactory certainty, that even in the time of the Apostles, the palace of the emperor was a seat of the growing church in Rome. The warnings against the abuse of wealth which are found in Timothy and in the Epistle of James and in the Apocalypse show that the church had some men of wealth and standing among its members. Most of the converts came from the middle and lower classes, but there were some from the other classes.

Gibbon maintains that the new sect was almost entirely composed of the dregs of the populace; of peasants and mechanics, of boys and women, of beggars and slaves. Celsus says the same thing in effect. These statements are not borne out by the facts. Origen says that among the multitude of converts the simple and ignorant necessarily outnumbered the intelligent, as the former always do the latter. But there is an abundance of evidence showing that all ranks and conditions were reached. Ramsay holds that Christianity spread at first among the educated more rapidly than among the uneducated. We are told that it spread among the aristocratic, the wealthy, the cultured, and the official classes; at court, in the army, and among women. Thus Eusebius says, "Still more wonderful were those conspicuous for their wealth, birth, and high position, and the eminent in learning and philosophy yet ranked everything second to their faith. In one city in Phrygia all the inhabitants, together with the mayor, the governor, all who held office, and the entire populace to boot, confessed themselves Christians, nor would they obey in the least those who bade them worship idols. In the time of Philip the Arabian it is said that Christians were found occupying the chief places of honour at the court and in the state, while their religion enjoyed high esteem as well as perfect liberty among Greeks and Barbarians. A large number of the people of Rome, eminent for great wealth and high birth, turned to their salvation along with all their households and families. Referring to the catacombs Godet says that there are found at every

step in those burying places names belonging to the noblest families of the city, some of them even closely related to the imperial family. This fact demonstrates that Christianity found access from the first to the upper classes of Roman society. Of the court of Valerian it is said that it was full of pious people; it was a veritable church of God.

Women were numbered among the converts and given a place in the church. Some women followed our Lord on His preaching tours and ministered to Him of their substance. Among these were Mary Magdalene and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others. It was to a woman that our Lord first appeared after He rose from the dead. He said to her, "Go unto My brethren, and say to them, 'I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" A company of women continued steadfastly in prayer with the brethren in Jerusalem while they were waiting for the promised Spirit. In Samaria women and men were enrolled as believers. The first convert in Europe was a woman. In Thessalonica there were many of the chief women among the converts. The same was true in Berœa. One of the two converts in Athens was Damaris, a woman. Philip the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied. Phœbe was a servant of the church in Cenchreæ, and had been a helper of many and of the great apostle. Prisca and Aquila laid down their necks for His life. Paul considers Tryphæna and Tryphosa and Persis and Mary and Euodia and Syntyche worthy of special mention. He sent salutations to eighteen men and to fifteen women. John addressed one of his letters to the Elect Lady and to her children, whom he loved in the truth. By winning the woman and the man the Christian home was made possible. Women were taught to conduct themselves modestly and becomingly; that even if their husbands obeyed not the word, they might without the word be gained by the behaviour of their wives.

The gospel won its greatest victories in the cities. It is said

that the larger the city or town, the larger the church that grew up in it. We learn from the New Testament that there were churches or believers in the following cities: Jerusalem, Samaria, Joppa, Cæsarea, Sharon, Tyre, Sidon, Ptolemais, Damascus, Salamis, Antioch, Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Hierapolis, Colossæ, Philadelphia, Sardis, Thyatira, Pergamum, Ephesus, Smyrna, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa, Corinth, Athens, Cenchreæ, Rome, Babylon. The cities were centres of commerce, and government, and civilization. The cities lent extraordinary advantages to the church. From the cities the gospel penetrated deep into the country districts. Thus Paul spent two whole years in Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia; as a result all that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. The seven churches mentioned in Revelation were located in cities that were great centres of trade. By capturing the cities the empire was practically won.

III. *Of the obstacles the church encountered and overcame in order to triumph.* At first it was ignored. It was small and poor, and the authorities did not condescend to notice it. They saw in it no ground for alarm. As it grew in numbers and influence it was assailed with all the resources of argument and ridicule. The Christians were accused of the foulest crimes; they were lampooned; they were cursed; they were charged with atheism and treason; they were outlawed by judges; they were sent to the stake and to the block. Because they had neither temples nor altars, and because they refused to acknowledge the divinity of the emperor and would not worship the gods, they were called atheists. They were charged with incest and child-murder and cannibalism. It was said of them that they were haters of mankind. It was alleged that they were rustic and illiterate fellows; that they admitted no wise men to fellowship. It was affirmed that they said, "Let no man come that is learned, wise, and prudent"; for these things they account evil and unlawful, "but if any be un-

learned, an infant or an idiot, let him come and welcome"; thus openly declaring that none but fools and such as are devoid of sense and reason, slaves and silly women and little children, are fit disciples for the God they worship. The Christians were sneered at as a poor, beggarly, hunger-starved generation, as the scum and refuse of the people. It was said that at home and before their elders and betters they were as silent as fishes, but when they got some women and some children together, who then was so wise and so learned? who so full of talk and so able to teach and to instruct as they? They were denounced as mountebanks and impostors, who bragged great things in the presence of the vulgar, in the company of boys and slaves and simple people.

The next step was persecution. The vested interests led the attack. The masters of the Philippian maid who had the spirit of divination saw that the hope of gain was gone, when the evil spirit was driven out, and they laid hold of Paul and Silas and dragged them before the rulers and preferred charges against them. Because of these charges the apostles were beaten and thrust into prison. Later Paul's preaching stirred up the silversmiths of Ephesus. They saw that if his preaching prevailed their business would be destroyed, and the temple of the great goddess Diana would be made of no account. The historian says that the animals offered in sale for sacrifice and the fodder for these animals found few purchasers. The change in faith led to a financial loss on the part of some.

In course of time Christianity became a forbidden faith. The edict of one emperor said that on a fixed day in every part of the empire every suspected person, without distinction of age or sex, must appear at a temple and offer sacrifice or burn incense; he must blaspheme Christ, and then partake of meat which had been offered to idols. Another edict said that the churches were to be destroyed; the Christian sacred books were to be burned; the Christians were to be deprived of all civil rights and of any official position which they might hold; and

Christians holding any position at court, if they were obstinate in refusing to deny their faith, were threatened with slavery. Men were punished if they confessed that they were Christians. It was a crime to wear the name of Christ. Christians were regarded as criminals and worthy of death. They were dealt with as brigands caught in the act. If there was any public calamity the blame was laid at the door of the Christians. "If the Tiber rises, if the Nile does not rise, if the heavens give no rain, if there is an earthquake, famine, or pestilence, straightway the cry is, 'Christians to the lions.'" Christians were sewed up in the skins of wild beasts, and dogs tore them to pieces. Some were smeared with inflammable gums and placed at convenient intervals in Nero's garden and set on fire, and thus were made to serve the purpose of lamps, while Nero clad as a charioteer conducted a chariot race for the delight of the multitude. Juvenal spoke of the Christians in these words,

> "At the stake they shine,
> Who stand with throat transfixed, and smoke and burn."

The last attempt of the opponents of the faith was that of compromise and imitation. Christianity was no longer the object of unqualified ridicule; only its exclusive claims were challenged. Christ and His teachings were respected; only those who worshipped Him as God were calumniated. Alexander Severus placed an image of Christ in his private chapel together with images of Apollonius and Orpheus and Abraham. An eclectic system of religion was invented. It consisted of a combination of elements taken from all the religions and from Oriental mysticism and from Platonic speculations with a dash of Christianity. There was a Trinity, a Saviour both human and Divine, a doctrine of mediation, of atonement, and of a future life, a form of baptism and the Eucharist. Paganism was copying Christianity, and, as has been said, was by that act lowering her arms. Lightfoot said under the banner of

Neo-Platonism and with weapons forged in the armoury of Christianity itself, the contest is renewed. "But the day of heathenism is past. This new champion retires from the field of conflict in confusion and the gospel remains in sole possession of the field."

These obstacles could hinder and modify the progress of the gospel, but they could not arrest it. Some of the Christians said of themselves that they did not speak great things; they did great things. When they were accused of atrocious crimes they replied, "We are Christians; among us no evil is done."

They could cite the testimony of Pliny which was to the effect that they bound themselves to abstain from theft, brigandage, and adultery, to keep their word, and not refuse to restore what had been entrusted to them. When they were ridiculed as rustics and illiterates they could point to the large number of orators and grammarians and philosophers and physicians and lawyers and other men of renown who had cast in their lot with them. When they suffered for the Name of Christ they counted it an honour. They glorified God in that Name. They did not count their lives as of any account to themselves, if by their death they could do most to advance the cause of Christ in the world. Polycarp said, "Eighty and six years have I served Him; He has done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme His name, my King who saved me?" With such champions the church must triumph; failure was impossible.

In the year 313 the Edict of Toleration was issued. Prior to that time Constantine was enrolled among the converts. It was in the sign of the Cross that he crushed his pagan rival and became sole emperor. The Edict put an end to persecution. Christianity had won the day. Professor Freeman says, "The miracle of miracles, greater than dried up seas and cloven rocks, greater than the dead rising to life, was when Augustus on his throne, pontiff of gods and Rome, himself a god to the subjects of Rome, bent himself to become the worshipper of a crucified provincial of his empire." Julian, a nephew of

Constantine, undertook to restore Paganism. He went to the Grove at Daphne to worship. He expected to find a sumptuous sacrifice and a festal crowd of worshippers. But he was greeted by no crowd; he was greeted with neither choral songs nor fragrant incense. There was one priest, and one boy, and one goose, which was to be offered to the god of the Sun. Paganism was dead and could not be galvanized into the semblance of life. Soon after Julian died and the attempted restoration came to an end. The Galilean had conquered.

It has been shown that the mighty system of false religion which Christianity had to confront has not now a single temple, nor a single worshipper, left in all the lands where it once prevailed. Yet it was a system so wide-spread and supported by so many interests, that it might have seemed able to bid defiance to all attacks.

The church of that time had the Mediterranean world as its field, and a hundred million souls to evangelize and Christianize. The church of to-day has the whole world and a population sixteen times as great. The church of that time had one strong central government to deal with. We have many governments to deal with; but under all we are free to carry on our work. The church of that time found a system of roads stretching out from the Golden Milestone in the Forum to Cadiz, to the Rhine, to the Danube, to the Dardanelles. We have railroads and steamships and cables and telegraphs. Then one language was understood by educated people in all parts of the empire. Now many languages must be mastered; but with grammars and lexicons ready to hand this task is immensely simplified. Then there was a peculiar people found in every city; they had the law of Moses and the prophecies and the psalms; their synagogues were open to the missionaries. These people were in a measure prepared to hear and to accept the truth. No such people is found to-day in the non-Christian lands. But the Christian nations are rich and powerful, and their fame has gone out into all the earth. The

missionaries are supposed to represent these nations; that gives them a certain prestige and secures a hearing for their message. The church herself is rich and strong and respected. She has a vast literature and is prepared to equip her agents as no apostle or evangelist was equipped in that early time. The church of to-day has many advantages that the church in the first centuries did not have.

We know that the early missionaries went about this work in earnest. "On Roman roads built for military expeditions, down the current of strange rivers, into forest recesses, into the thick of city life where the convention of culture and the cruelties of paganism offered bitter welcome they went forward to their destiny, evermore dreamers who made the dream come true." Nothing less than the whole creation could satisfy them. It is for us of to-day to see the same vision, to be actuated by the same motives, and to seek the same goal. It is for us to do as much as in us lies that we may hasten the time when in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and when every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

XXI

CHRISTIAN UNITY AND WORLD-WIDE EVANGELISM

Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou hast given MeI have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst Me.—John 17: 20–23.

THE only prayer of our Lord that is recorded at length is found in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel according to John. The unity of His followers is the central thing in that marvellous prayer. "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as we are." "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be in us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me." He had in mind the widest possible extension of His kingdom. He was thinking of the time when the gospel would be preached in all creation under heaven, and He prayed for the unity of those called out of every nation and tongue and tribe and people. It was through a united church that the world was to be won from sin to holiness. I am to speak of Christian unity in its relation to world-wide evangelism. I ask you to note:

I. *The emphasis placed on unity in the Scriptures.* Our Lord said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." As there is one and but one God and Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, so there is to be one flock or one household of the faith. There is one divine Teacher, and all His pupils are brethren. The believers gathered out of all nations are to form one body, and of that one body Jesus Christ is the head. So it is said, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." In this one sentence the thought of unity is presented seven times. Again, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." There are many members but one body. The same thought is found in Galatians. "For ye are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Greek nor Jew, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male or female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus." Race and national distinctions are done away. All are fellow members of the body, and fellow heirs, and fellow partakers of the promise of Christ in the gospel. Paul prayed thus for the Christians in Rome, "Now the God of patience and comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Jesus Christ; that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." To the Philippians he said, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast

in one Spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel." He besought them that they fulfill His joy, "that they be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind ; doing nothing through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, each counting the other better than himself; not looking each one to his own things, but each one also to the things of others." To the Corinthians he said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." In that time some were contentious. There were those who said, "I am of Paul"; and others who said, "I am of Apollos"; and others still who said, "And I am of Peter." The answer to these contentious ones was, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? Who is Paul? and who is Apollos? but ministers by whom ye believed." They were baptized into the name of Christ and in their baptism they accepted Him as their Saviour and their Lord. Baptism is a unifying ordinance; it brings the baptized into Christ, and not into Paul or Apollos or Peter. The Lord's Supper brings us to His table and thus unites us as one family. We being many are one body, one bread.

Because of the natural tendencies towards division and strife the apostles urged the early Christians to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. For the same reason our Lord prayed that they might be one. There are few subjects upon which so much is said in the New Testament as upon unity. This subject bulks large in the thought of Christ and His apostles. The danger was great; so the note of warning rings out clear and strong from the very shadow of the cross.

II. *The nature of the unity for which our Lord prayed.* This is set forth under various figures. It is like the union of the different members of the body in the body. These are

pervaded with the same life; they constitute one organism. They are so adjusted in the body that there is no schism. Each is concerned about the welfare of all the others. If one member suffers all the members suffer with it; if one member is honoured all rejoice with it. It is like the union of the branches and the vine. Every branch shares in the common life of the vine. This union is a vital one, and not at all like the union of staves in a barrel or bricks in a wall. Christians are partakers of the Divine nature. They have a new heart and a new spirit. Believing in Christ they have life in His name. They are animated by the same Spirit of holiness. So it is said, "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." The Christian can say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live not of myself, but by the faith of Him that loved me and gave Himself up for me." Having Christ's life in him he resembles Christ in feeling, in purpose, in judgment, in aspiration, and in motive. He loves and hates the same things. He seeks the same ends. This union is similiar to that subsisting between the Father and the Son. "Even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be in us." "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one." This is a double unity; they are united in themselves and they are united in Christ. The Father is in the Son, as His organ of manifestation and the object of His affection; and the Son is in the Father abiding ever in the light of His glory and in the power of His name. "I and the Father are one." They are one in essence, one in aim, one in desire, and one in effort. The Father loves the Son and the Son loves and serves the Father. There can be no clash between them. It is desired that those who are born of God and know God should constitute a unity resembling that in its intimacy and harmony. So we are taught to cultivate whatever will strengthen the ties that bind us together. We are to

follow peace with all men and the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

Nothing is more common than for men to combine for different purposes. Thus they combine in business, in politics, and in sport. Very often the only thing in which they all agree is the end sought. Thus in business they seek for profits. In politics they seek the offices or the adoption of certain policies. In sport they seek amusement. There is no change in their natures or in their views when they enter into those combinations. They are precisely the same after that they were before. It is not so here. Those who constitute the body of Christ have been begotten from above. They have been washed, and justified and sanctified by the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. They have been renewed in mind after the image of their creator. And now with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord they are changed into the same image, from glory unto glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit. Again, we can form mechanical unions. We can bind wood and iron and gold and silver together. Each object that enters the combination retains all the qualities peculiar to it. There is union in such combinations but not unity. Gold is the same in all parts of the universe. It is the same in all ages and in all worlds. The same is true of all metals. The same is true of all Christians. They are begotten of God; they are possessed of His nature; they are one in mind and in heart. They are one in spite of the flight of time. Christians of the first century and of the last and of all intervening centuries form one community. They are one in spite of space. Christians in all parts of the world, those that speak different tongues and have different manners and customs are one flock, even as they are all tended by one Shepherd. They are one in spite of all differences, physical, mental, social, and spiritual. They are children of one Father and they constitute the one household of the faith.

III. *The basis of the unity for which Jesus prayed.* Speaking through one of the Prophets the Lord said, "Behold,

I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of sure foundation." The apostle said, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Christians are said to be built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. They are living stones and are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable through Jesus Christ. Christ Himself is the only basis of unity. We can unite on Him; we cannot unite on a theory of the atonement or of inspiration, or upon the five points of Calvinism or on the five points of Arminianism. Our schisms are the result of building in whole or in part on some other foundation. We have found some other rock than Christ. We do not differ about Him, but about what somebody said about what He said or did or was. All can accept Him as their Saviour and Lord; all cannot accept the theories or conclusions of the fathers or of the councils or of the schools. It is not necessary for us to have complete and exact knowledge about Christ and the method of His salvation. It is necessary that we put our trust in Him and do His commandments. It is not necessary for us to understand astronomy before we enjoy the light and warmth of the sun. It is not necessary that we know how the seed grows in the ground and how food nourishes the body; the important thing is that we sow and eat. So the essential thing for us is to know what Christ said and to do that. There is no dispute as to what He said; the dispute is as to substituting something else that we are told will answer quite as well. It is probable that we shall never all agree about the substitute proposed for what the Lord commanded. It is only when we hear His words and do them that we can feel certain we are standing on the rock.

This does not mean that all are to think alike about everything. Unity does not mean the same as uniformity. The branches differ in many respects. There is endless variety in the same tree. No two branches and no two leaves are ex-

actly alike. The branches differ in length and girth and in form. But they are all filled with the same life and all bear the same kind of fruit. The members of the body differ greatly. No two are alike. Each one has its place and function. The members are all parts of the body and they all work for the good of the general whole and they are all obedient to the same brain. So there is room for differences among the people of God. It is not necessary nor is it desirable that all shall be as much alike as coins from the same mint or peas out of the same pod. Variety adds spice and contributes to progress. Americans differ about the tariff and about finance and about expansion and about a thousand matters of more or less importance. But they all believe in the country and in its institutions. If it were necessary they would lay down their lives for their country. Their faith in America is the principal thing; their differing opinions about subordinate matters are of little moment. So it is our faith in Christ that saves us and not our opinions about matters that He has not revealed. If we hold to Christ as the Head of the body we can well afford to disagree about theoretical and philosophical questions; because these no man can know thoroughly, and if he did know he would be none the better for it.

In the Middle Ages the church was a unit. All thought and spoke the same things. But that was not a unity of life and of intelligent loyalty to Christ. It was the unity of the graveyard where all the heads and all the feet are turned in the same direction. The leaders told the people what they were to believe and do. The people were not supposed to be capable of doing any thinking for themselves. One man was asked what he believed; he said he believed what the priest believed. When asked what the priest believed; he said he believed what the church believed. And when asked what he and the church believed; he said they both believed the same thing. There is room for thought and for opinion; the truth is we cannot be true to Christ and permit others to think for us.

If we do our own thinking we may come to conclusions differing from those reached by others. No matter as to that, if we hold fast to Christ as our Redeemer and Lord and do what He has commanded. Our ground of unity is in Him and not in our opinions or in our reasoning processes.

IV. *The effect of the unity contemplated.* Our Lord prayed for the unity of all believers that the world might believe and know that the Father had sent the Son. Unity was not at an end in itself, but a means to an end. The unity of His disciples is regarded as influencing the world to knowledge and to faith. In fact it amounts to a demonstration of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. When the world will see millions called out of it, distinguished from it, changed from what they were in heart and in life; washed, justified, sanctified, ennobled, they will say, "We will go with you; for we see that God is in you." Matthew Henry says, "The unity and harmony of Christians, the beauty of their conduct, as they live and act as brethren in the Lord, will constrain them to believe. When Christianity causes strife to cease, when it cools the fiery, when it smooths the rugged, and disposes men to be kind and lovely, courteous and beneficent to all men; studious to preserve and promote peace in all relations of society; this will recommend it to all who have any natural religion or any natural affection in them. It will beget in them good thoughts of Christ. They will believe and know that God sent Him, and that His doctrine is true and divine, in that His religion prevails to join so many of different capacities, tempers, and interests in other things, in one body of faith, and in one heart of love. It is plain He was sent by a God of love and peace when His teaching makes for peace and concord and good-will." This unity will produce an impression on the world which now rejects Christ and does not believe in His great commission. The unity which springs from the blended life of the various and even contradictory elements in the church will prove the reality of its divine origin.

The history of the early church shows this. We are told that the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; and not one of them said that aught of the things he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. The church was a unit in that period. It had little wealth. There were few people of learning or rank connected with it. Christianity was denounced as a base superstition; its adherents were called atheists. They are spoken of as if they were the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things. But they were united in Christ and filled with His Spirit and they were irresistible. The might of Rome went down in defeat before them. Gibbon has shown us how the banner of the Cross was erected in triumph over the ruins of the Capitol.

It was as clear as a sunbeam to Christ and His apostles that the energy and efficiency of the church would be in proportion to its unity. It is for this reason that so much thought and space are given to this topic in the New Testament. The factionist of that time was the heretic. Those who caused divisions and occasions of stumbling were to be marked and avoided. A house or a kingdom divided against itself could not stand. The Lord's work has been seriously hindered and crippled by divisions and by the evils that have followed in their train. Many seeing the condition of the church were scandalized and refused to have anything to do with it. At the present time the church is broken up into three main divisions and into a much greater number of subdivisions. There are Protestants and Catholics and Greeks. These have little in common. England has two hundred and eighty different kinds of Christians. We have about one hundred and fifty in America. There are seventeen branches of the Methodist family; twenty-two of the Lutheran; eight of the Catholic; thirteen of the Baptist; twelve of the Presbyterian; and six of the Adventist. Christendom is a veritable Babel. We know the effect of that upon thinking people.

In a village of a thousand people there is one school and six

or more churches. In cities churches are often so grouped that one can listen to two or more services at the same time. That results in waste and strife and confusion and every evil work. Those that should be sent to the front are doing garrison duty. They are protecting their flocks, not against the wiles of the devil, but against their religious neighbours. Money that is needed for missions is kept at home to maintain these different establishments. The practical effect is the hindrance of the gospel. Sensible people say, "Agree among yourselves and then come and teach us." Much is spent on the mission fields, but it could be spent with much greater profit if all who go out were perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, and if all spoke the same thing. The king of Uganda said, "How am I to know what is right and what is false? Every white man seems to have a different religion." A Brahmo leader said, "When so many churches and sects offer themselves and demand allegiance, India, confounded and vexed, asks which is the true church of Christ." On reaching England the same man said he found himself surrounded by various religious denominations, each offering him its own interpretation of the Bible, and its own peculiar Christian belief. He felt as a man in a vast market, he was vexed with the conflicting wares and the quarrelling sects. Some Indians were asked if they wanted schools. They said No. If they had schools they would have to have churches; and they did not want churches; because if they had churches they would have to fight like Catholics and Protestants about God. They said, "We do fight, but we do not want to fight about God." A Rabbi said, "Show me the peaceful reign of the Messiah, and I will become a Christian and not before."

The missionaries unite as far as they can. They feel the need of unity as the friends at home do not. They meet to pray and to seek for it. They are convinced that great injury is being done by introducing the unhappy divisions of Christendom among people who do not wish them and who cannot

understand them. They want to give a pure gospel and to present a solid front to the foe. They feel that they could take the world for Christ in a single generation if they were a united hand. Their strength is dissipated and Christ is dishonoured by division. At the last Ecumenical Conference there was much said about Comity. One speaker said, "I like not that word; it is simply veneered selfishness." He disliked it as much as he did the word toleration. The thing desired by all is not comity or toleration or federation, but unity in Christ, so that all shall with one heart and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In our great gatherings we sing, "We are not divided; all one body we." Is it so? Are we not almost hopelessly divided? The best people in all the churches are coming close together, and this converging march is going to continue. Nothing can stop it, because God's omnipotent hand is behind it. There are many unmistakable signs of promise. We see them in the Young Men's Christian Association, in the Young Women's Christian Association, in the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and in the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour. By keeping some truths in the background we can walk and work together in a measure. But it is as plain as plain can be that the ideal for which our Lord prayed is still far in the distance. So the work at home and abroad is hindered.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were great and good men sought to effect the union of Christendom. Councils were held; correspondence was conducted; books and pamphlets were published. Calixtus undertook to unite the followers of Luther and Calvin. He was denounced as a traitor and identified as the beast of the Apocalypse. Durie undertook to unite all Protestant bodies. He travelled much and conferred with the leaders in church and state. At the close of his life he complained with bitter regret that his labours were lost. The king of Poland thought a union of Catholics

and Protestants not impossible; the sole result of his advocacy was to increase the split and the hatred on both sides. Cyril Lucar proposed a union between the Greek and the Reformed churches. He was deposed and banished fourteen times by the Sultan; in the end he was strangled and his body thrown into the sea. Such great names as Stillingfleet, Baxter, Locke, Chillingworth, Owen, Wesley, and Robert Hall are identified with this cause. John Wesley desired to form a league, offensive and defensive with every follower of Christ.

Great changes have been wrought in recent times. It used to be held that the divided state of the church was a providential arrangement. No attack was permitted on this feature of the church's life. A few years ago a good man was arraigned for daring to say that sectarianism is sin. He was put out of the church of his fathers and the church of his love. Now the most popular sentiment in any great assembly is the unity of all believers. No other calls out such loud and long-continued applause. Many causes help to foster the spirit of unity. This is the age of great combinations. Unity is in the air and in the hearts of men. Professor Shields of Princeton said, "He must be blind indeed who does not see that the movement for church unity has become the characteristic movement of modern Christendom. This is the one question which moves the whole church evangelical in both hemispheres. There is no corner of the Christian world, no outpost of Christian missions, to which it has not penetrated; and no grade of the ministry from the pope himself down to the humblest evangelist, that has not voiced its claims."

There is not only a desire for union and a demand for union, but in some instances union has been effected. Thus four Presbyterian bodies in Canada have become one. In that same country six Wesleyan bodies have been consolidated. In Canada the Presbyterians and Congregationalists and Wesleyans are arranging a further union. In Australia several bodies have united under one banner. In Germany the

Lutherans and Reformed bodies have come together. In Scotland two of the most influential bodies have united to form one body. In Japan three missions coöperate and are known as The United Church of Christ in Japan. Within as many months three Methodist missions have united to form one Methodist Church in Japan. In Korea four Presbyterian missions have joined their forces and now work under one organization. In India several unions have been reported. Schaff has well said that the war between Rome, Wittenberg, Geneva, and Oxford will be fought out to a peaceful end, when all the churches shall be thoroughly Christianized and all the creeds of Christendom united in the Creed of Christ.

In the face of the problems that confront the church in our time, it is evident that we should sink all differences as far as we can conscientiously do so and stand as one man for the faith of the gospel. Not only in the face of these problems, but as we stand before our God to whom we must give an account, we should do this. In the presence of a great task or a great peril we know how people get together. When war was declared against Spain Mason and Dixon's line disappeared like frost-work from a window-pane in the morning sun. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, it vanished forever. During the siege of the legation in Peking national lines and religious lines were forgotten. In the presence of the infuriated Boxers all felt that they were one and that their salvation depended upon their standing together. Protestant and Catholic and Greek were one for the time. During the siege wherever the line was hard pressed there the defenders rallied, regardless of what nationality held the hard pressed point, because a failure at one point meant a failure at every point. One of the interesting incidents of the siege was connected with the international gun. This was an old English six-pounder. It was mounted on an Austrian carriage; it was loaded with German powder and Russian shells; it was fired by the trained hand and eye of an American gunner. Had it not been for the

spirit of unity that prevailed in that most critical period all must have perished, and no one would have been left to tell the awful tale of their destruction.

There are men enough and there is money enough to evangelize the whole world if the spirit of Christ were the inspiration of every movement that bears His name. If the men at work now were distributed to the best advantage the earth could be covered with gospel ministries. Then the world would believe. A united church would do such a work as would put critics to shame and to silence. They would fall down and would say that God is here of a truth. And heathenism that is now united and blatant and defiant would feel that its hour of doom had come. A united church is needed to evangelize the world; a united church is abundantly able to do it. A divided and discordant church is shorn of much of her strength. Her efforts are puny in comparison with what they might and should be. In the times of David and Solomon God's ancient people were united and invincible. One chased a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. After the time of Solomon the people were divided, and Judah vexed Israel, and Israel vexed Judah. The glory had departed, and the enemies came in and carried both into captivity. A few decades ago Germany was divided into two score sovereign states. Germany had no influence either at home or abroad. Under Bismarck Germany united, and now Germany is one of the foremost nations in the world. Not long ago Italy was a mere geographical expression. She had no voice at the round table of the nations to which any attention was paid. United Italy is another matter. A wise proverb says that three men pulling together are worth more than six men working apart. The reconstruction of Christendom on the original basis would increase the power of the church tenfold, at the least.

The conversion of the world to Christ is the one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves. It is the one purpose that has been in the mind of God since the time the

foundations of the earth were laid and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The accomplishment of this mighty task depends largely upon the unity of the people of God. It was for this unity that our Lord prayed. For this unity believers should pray most devoutly; they should do all in their power to bring it about. If this unity is attained Christ must occupy His rightful place in the church as a whole and in each one of its members. Let Him be sole Prophet, Priest, and King; let His self-sacrificing love be the inspiration of every believing heart, and then we shall soon have the true church of Christ on earth, and we shall speedily see the whole world redeemed.

At the Federation Conference one speaker called attention to the fact that there was a time when representatives of all the tribes of Israel, men of war that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron to make David king over all Israel. And all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king. Tribal rivalries and dissensions and jealousies gave way before the national sentiment. Under David's reign the kingdom extended from Damascus to the river of Egypt. What is needed now on the part of those who would make Jesus King is that they forget all differences and all dissensions and unite. By so doing they will hasten the time when great voices shall be heard in heaven saying, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."

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